The Last Things

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VII

The Last Things

By
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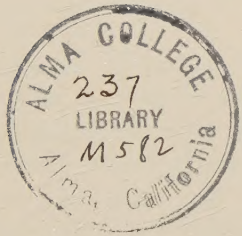

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PREFACE

In this summary of the Catholic doctrine of *The Last Things* an attempt has been made to set forth, not only the certainties of faith, but also the more probable speculative conclusions of the classic Thomist theology.

For the mere exposition of a dogma and its concomitant truths cannot satisfy man's legitimate curiosity. Especially is this true when we are dealing with the life beyond the grave. Many questions and problems arise which clamour for an answer. The imagination, unrestrained and unguided by a sound and reasoned theology, is, as unhappy experience shows, a danger rather than a help to true doctrine, and therefore it is to St. Thomas, the prince of theologians, that we have gone for light upon all matters that are obscure. The reader will not be slow to discern, from the very moderation of the solutions proposed, how greatly the classic theology distrusts the imagination in seeking an answer to these questions.

The writer has made considerable use of articles written by himself, and already published in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, the *Revue Apologétique* and elsewhere. The present volume may be called a synthesis of his teaching that has already seen the light piecemeal. He may be allowed to hope that past and present students of the faculty of theology at Lille will be pleased

to meet in these pages the leading ideas expounded to them during the scholastic year 1925--1926. To them in particular is this book dedicated by their old professor, as a testimony of his affectionate regard, and a memento of his last year passed in their service.

Lille.

27th March, 1927.

THE LAST THINGS

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

I. *Death puts an end to the time of probation.* (1) *Teaching of the sacred scriptures;* (2) *of the Church.* II. *Psychology of the disembodied soul.* (1) *Desire of the last end the motive of all other desires;* (2) *Instability of the will with regard to the last end during this life;* (3) *The will's immutability in the next life.* III. *Duration of the next life.* (1) *Aeviternity* (2) *As applied to* (a) *angels,* (b) *disembodied souls.*

In order to understand the Catholic doctrine concerning man's last end we must first consider three things, namely, the ending of the life of probation by death, the psychology of the soul after its separation from the body, and the duration which is the measure of the soul's life in the next world.

I. Death puts an End to the Time of Probation

Man's preparation for the future life does not extend beyond the end of this life; his future state of unending happiness or damnation depends upon the issue of his earthly pilgrimage. This is a truth which the Church has always explicitly and directly taught. True, there may be no solemn, conciliar definition of it, yet it has always been preached by the Fathers of the Church as a dogma of faith, while the contrary doctrine that the future life may admit of a further trial, of amendment and penance, was branded as heresy, and under the name of *origenism* condemned in the sixth century.

(1) *This dogma is taught by the sacred writers*

In the 25th chapter of St. Matthew there is a description of the last judgment. It is described as being concerned solely with what men have done in this present life, and its outcome is the sentence either of eternal reward or eternal punishment. As a result, then, of this judgment there will follow a fixed state, either of misery or of happiness, depending wholly upon the ending of this present life.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke xvi) conveys the same lesson. We are told that they received the reward due to the deeds done in their earthly life, and that their present state allows of no change. Abraham's words express the same truth: "And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos; so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither" (xvi, 26). And, when the rich man asks Abraham to send someone to warn his brothers to do penance, since he from his place of torments can do nothing, he only adds confirmation of the same teaching.

This dogma, likewise, clearly forms the basis of Christ's words when He warns us to break every attachment and give up every habit that may be a cause of scandal (Matt. xviii, 8-9; Mark ix, 42-47); to deny ourselves and take up our cross (Luke xiv, 27); to watch and pray in constant expectation of the last day (Matt. xxiv, 42-44) in order not to be taken unawares in "surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life," with consequent eternal loss of the soul (Luke xxi, 34). All this clearly presupposes that the moment of death is decisive, and that henceforth merit and demerit are alike impossible, and that man can no longer repent of his sins or, on the other hand, lose the grace of God. Death, then, puts a definite end to our time of probation.

St. Paul further confirms this truth when he says that, "we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil" (II Cor. v, 10). According to the constant teaching of the Scriptures, our future state depends upon the sentence passed at this tribunal. But, as already seen, the judgment will be concerned only with what we have done during this life, with the deeds accomplished during the union of soul and body. This fundamental thought throws light upon many of the Apostle's words: "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. vi, 2); and again, "Therefore, while we have time, let us work good to all men" (Gal. vi, 10); and again, "Exhort one another every day, whilst it is called to-day, that none of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii, 13). In this last text the inspired writer harks back to the words of the ninety-fourth psalm: "To-day, if you hear his voice harden not your hearts" (8), and applies the word *to-day* to the whole time of man's life on earth. His meaning then is, "exhort one another so long as God gives you the 'day' of this life, and before the coming of night, when it is impossible to labour for heaven, to put off the hardening arising from sin, to turn from evil to good, and to earn the reward promised to the just alone."

We find the same teaching in St. John's Gospel, v, 25-29. According to him the voice of the Son of God will be heard upon two different occasions. First, during this life: "The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God" (v. 25). The reference here is to the spiritually dead, to those dead in sin. The Son of God's voice shall be heard by them, for their spiritual resurrection, "and they that hear shall live" (ibid.). The call comes to many who

are dead, but is not heard, that is, answered by all. The second call will come at the end of the world. "The hour cometh (but this is not the hour that now is) wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God" (v, 28). The reference, then, is to the physically dead. But to what will they be called? They will not be called to an amendment of life. There is no room here for the distinction between those who will and those who will not answer to the call. All men, rising from death, will answer the summons to judgment. "And they that have done good things," during this mortal life, "shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (v, 29), which will seal their condemnation.

(2) *This dogma the Church's official teaching*

We have mentioned above the errors known as Origenism, which were rejected by the Church in the sixth century. Origen himself was certainly responsible for some of them. We are bound to admit, for example, that, not only in his *De Principiis*, but also in several other works, the great doctor of Alexandria positively taught that it is possible for spiritual beings in the other world to be converted from evil to good. He laid it down as certain that all intellectual beings will undergo a final restoration; this conclusion be based upon the principle of freewill, which, he thought, must necessarily involve the power of choosing between moral good and evil. This ultimate restoration is called by theologians, *apocatastasis*. Origen's error in this matter is thus described by Père Richard in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (art. *Enfer*). "According to the Apostle and the Psalmist everything must ultimately be brought back to unity, and all things be subjected to Christ. As to the nature of this subjection, I think, says Origen, that it is the same subjection as we desire for ourselves,

the same as that practised by the Apostles and all the saints. Now, in the beginning, all things made up a perfect unity; then was introduced variety with sundry perfections and defections. In heaven we see the different orders of angels, while the demons have suffered an irremediable defection, irremediable, that is, as long as this world lasts, but not absolutely so, as some have understood. For may it not be possible for even the demons, since they are free, to be converted in the far-off future? Meanwhile, all things occupy their proper positions, waiting until, at various times, and some only at the end of all time, they shall be restored to their original state. . . . The basis of this apocatastasis is the subjection of all creatures to Christ" (col. 58).

It is not for us to enquire into how it was that this teaching gave no offence until the fifth century, and seems not to have attracted the attention of the Church. Then, however, it began to work harm in the Church and to affect belief in the eternity of hell. It was denounced by St. Jerome. But it was not until the sixth century that, on the Emperor Justinian's personal initiative, Origenism received its death-blow. The imperial theologian had drawn up an edict against the Origenist teachings, which was approved by the Council of Constantinople, presided over by the patriarch Menas (A.D. 538 or 543). The acts of this council, which of itself had no œcumenical authority, were afterwards sent to all the bishops and archimandrites, who were required to sign the anathemas against Origen and his errors. The emperor obtained likewise the approbation of the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, and of Pope Vigilius. "And so," writes Mgr. Duchesne, "the teachings of the illustrious Alexandrian were officially condemned, with all the civil sanctions proper to such an act" (*Revue des Questions historiques, 1884*, p. 390).

The ninth anathema was directed against the denial of the eternity of the pains of hell and against the possibility of an apocatastasis or final restoration of the demons and the wicked in the next world.

Death, then, puts a term, in the full sense of the word, to this life. Now and here is the time of probation, the time of struggle, and of choice between good and evil. With death begins a state of immutability either in good or in evil. Then probation stops; the choice will have been made, and the moral determination of the soul at the moment of its separation from the body will persist for ever as the changeless choice of man's free will.

II. The Psychology of Separated Souls

Why is this choice unchangeable? Whence comes the absolute impossibility of passing from good to evil, or from evil to good? These questions, at first sight disconcerting, are easily solved when we consider the psychological processes proper to disembodied souls.

(1) *The desire of the last end governs all other desires*

The ultimate end is of itself the reason of all our desires and all our deliberate acts of willing and seeking. For, by the very fact of choosing something, some good as our final end, we look upon it as desirable above all other things, since we love, desire, seek other things only with a view to this highest good. The love, therefore, with which we regard the object chosen as our final end is of itself definitive and irrevocable. For it cannot be modified except on account of some higher good, loved and sought with a still more ardent love. But this would be a flat contradiction, since, by the very definition of the term, the final end is the highest good and, therefore, the love of this end leaves no room for any other greater love.

(2) *During this life the will is unstable with regard to its choice of the ultimate end*

During this life of probation, however, we experience a mutability and instability of the will with regard not only to the means, or the immediate objects, of desire, but also as regards the final end. Our frequent weaknesses, failings and sins bear witness to this. Love of God gives place to the love of evil, that is, in reality, to self-love. Then, the heart having been touched by remorse, sorrow and repentance, the will moved, of course, and helped by grace, recovers itself, turns sincerely towards God, and is converted. The explanation of this instability of the will with regard to the final end is to be found in the conditions of our psychological life here below. While the soul is united with the body, the intelligence and will cannot act without the body's co-operation; not, indeed, that the body provides any organ of mind or will, but because the will's action follows that of the mind, which in its turn, is closely dependent upon sense-perception as a necessary condition. Hence in the psychological conditions of this life we can only love our last end under the form in which it is presented by the mind, while the mind cannot form an idea of the supreme good except by the way of abstraction from sense-perception. Thus we arrive at the idea of *bonum in communi*, or good in general, which is the necessary motive of all our wishes and desires. Objectively, indeed, this motive is identical with God, but this is by no means always the case, subjectively. For there is nothing more changeful and more unstable than the acts, impressions and perceptions of sense. Therefore as long as the present psychological conditions continue, it is always possible for us to change in our estimate of the supreme good and in our choice of the final end. Since our freewill depends for its action

upon the senses in the manner stated, thus participating in the instability which accompanies corporeal existence, and since it always depends upon the vague and confused idea of good in general as its ultimate motive, its field of possible variety of choice is almost boundless. For the will to be fixed upon a determinate choice we should need, says St. Thomas (*Summa contra Gentes*, bk. 4, ch. 95), "a special disposition of our nature which would cause us to will this or that as an object invested with the character of our highest happiness and our last end. . . . But as long as the soul is united with the body, our dispositions in this respect are essentially changeable. Sometimes our desire of something as our last end arises from our being moved by a quickly passing passion, in which case the desire is easily suppressed. . . . At other times a habit may lead us to desire some true or false good as our end; and since it is not easy to overcome a habit, such a desire is more persistent . . . yet even so, such an habitual disposition may, in the course of our life, be overcome."

(3) *In the next life the will is fixed in its adherence to the final end*

In the next life, however, things are different. As soon as the soul goes forth from the body, its action is subject to the conditions proper to the life of spiritual beings. This action is independent of the operation of the senses and proceeds by the way, not of abstraction, but of intuition. Spiritual beings do not know good in the abstract; they do not cleave to the supreme good through the medium of the transient and perishable things of earth; their choice of their last end is not made under the influence of habits or passions. But in one single act of intelligence and will, an act which at once exhausts their power of action with regard to the last end, they cleave to that good which they conceive as their

last end, and cling to it without the possibility of any future change. This good is a real, concrete object, and the love which ties them to it becomes the unchangeable first principle of all their desires and of every movement of their wills. Such was the psychology of the first deliberate act by which the angels, in the beginning, chose their last end and cleaved, some to God, and some to the surpassing perfection of themselves. By this act they entered into the state of attainment, and their glory or their fall was unchangeably fixed. It is the same with the human soul after death, and will be the same after the general resurrection when the soul, though re-united to the body, will be free from all subjection to it. In the next life the soul will be delivered from "all possibility of change with regard to the object holding the highest place in its affections and loved above all things else. There, the love of this object becomes the immovable pivot of the soul's freewill, and the object itself becomes the fixed pole, drawing to itself for ever all the powers of the soul's will. Hence the principle enunciated by St. John of Damascus, and accepted as a theological axiom: Death is for men what their first deliberate act was for the angels" (Card. Billot, *La Providence de Dieu*, "Etudes," 1923, p. 402).

But, it may be asked, when the unrepentant sinner's soul leaves his body, to what object can it cleave as to its highest good? Here again Cardinal Billot gives us the answer. "In saying that the lost sinner's soul, on leaving his body, remains fixed for ever in that disposition of his will in which he was at the moment of death, there can be no question of any attachment to those things which were the objects of his desires in this life; his appetite for these things, whether they be the pleasures of the flesh, or the accompaniments of riches, whether they be the objects of lust, or avarice, or human

pride or of any other passion whatsoever, has gone never to return. But we refer to what was the motive and root-cause of his attachment to sin; we refer to his attachment to that object which he loved above all other things, to the love of which all the motions of his heart were subordinated, that object around which turned, as upon their pivot, all the many and various elective acts of his freewill. This object is his *ego*, the lost soul's self; the *ego* set up as the final end of existence; the self which must be satisfied even though God and His laws and precepts be contemned; the self usurping the place of master and lord which belongs to Him alone who created us to praise, honour and serve Him; the self which, after death, is the only motive of a remorse like to that felt by the impious Antiochus when, racked by the awful disease that was killing him, he expressed regret for the monstrous excesses of his reign.

Well known are St. Augustine's words (*The City of God*, bk. 14, ch. 28): "Two loves have built two cities, the love of self even to the contempt of God, and the love of God even to the contempt of self. The former has built the city of evil, of disorder, of confusion, the infernal Babylon; the latter the city of order and of peace, the eternal Jerusalem." "These are the two supreme loves; they are opposed to one another as contraries, and all other loves are subordinate to them. These also are the two final ends between which we must make our choice while this life lasts. On the one side is God, holding in our hearts a higher place than our very selves, and therefore loved above all things, virtue's last end; on the other hand is self, raised even over God's head, the idol of our adoration, obedience and service, the final end of vice and sin. To whichever of these two ends the soul is actually attached at the moment of death, to that must it remain bound, by its own nature and of necessity, for all eternity. And since

our last end governs all our actions, since all that is good or evil in the will depends upon it, the necessary result is, for some, an unchangeable fixation in evil and moral disorder, and for others an equally unchangeable stability in good and the beauty of order, with the happiness arising from the impossibility of ever falling" (loc. cit. p. 397).

III. Duration of the Future Life

This state of stability in good or evil naturally suggests that, in the next world, time does not exist, at any rate under the same form as we know it in this life. And, in fact, when a man dies, do we not say that he has begun his "eternity"?

(1) *Aeviternity*

The word "eternity" is not exact; it ought to be "aeviternity" (from the Latin *aevum*, an age or duration). Eternity, however, is partially true.

"Since eternity," says St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.*, pars. 1, qu. x, art. 5), "is the measure of permanent existence, it follows that the less permanent anything is, the less eternal it is. Now some things are so mutable that their very being is the subject of perpetual change, or even consists essentially in change. The measure of such beings is time. Time, therefore, is the measure of the movements of all corruptible things. Other things are less remote from permanence of existence. They are neither essentially change in themselves nor subject to change. Yet over and above this permanent foundation of their being, there may be in them, either actually or potentially, some variation. So is it . . . with the angels; their being is changeless, yet in the exercise of their freedom, in the use of their knowledge and affections, and in their relations to places, they are subject to

change. But that existence which is measured by eternity neither changes nor is in any way the subject of change. Therefore, *time* connotes a "before" and an "after"; *aeviternity* in itself admits of neither, yet "before" and "after" may be its accidental concomitants; whereas in *eternity* there is neither "before" nor "after," nor is it in any way compatible with either."

The essential immutability of a pure spirit is a truth within the reach of human reason. Since the nature of a pure spirit is sheer perfection, unmixed with any element of imperfection, it cannot possibly undergo any substantial change. It possesses complete immutability; in its existence there can be no succession, no past or future; from the moment of its creation by God its life is a continuous present, which may rightly be called eternal. Hence St. Thomas does not hesitate to say that, "in an angel, if we consider his existence absolutely, there is no difference between the past and the future. . . . When we say of an angel that he is, or has been, or will be, we give different meanings to these expressions because we cannot conceive the existence of angels without comparing it with different parts of time" (loc. cit. ad. 3).

But, on the other hand, faith as well as reason teaches us that this essential immutability does not give us the full measure of the life of pure spirits. A pure spirit cannot know everything by a single act of his intelligence; he can receive from God successive illuminations of his mind, and be entrusted with different missions, and so forth. Confining ourselves strictly to the teachings of revelation, we know that it was possible for the angels, despite the immutability of their nature, freely to give their adhesion to God or to sin, and thus to enter into happiness or be thrown into hell. The contention between St. Michael and the angelic "prince of the kingdom of the Persians," described by the prophet

Daniel (x, 13-20), shows that the angels are capable of successive acts of the will. So likewise the Annunciation forms a special instant in the archangel Gabriel's life. Hence, alongside the substantial immutability of spiritual beings we must acknowledge in them the coexistence of acts which, being distinct one from another, are therefore successive, though not with that *continuous* succession that is the characteristic note of time. For when it is a question of purely spiritual acts without any relation to material things, their succession cannot be linked together in a real continuity. Hence, theologians seeking a Latin word to express this want of continuity in a succession of indivisible instants, have called it *tempus discretum*, discontinuous time.

We may, then, with St. Thomas, define aeviternity, the measure of the life of discarnate spirits, as "the duration of a being which, substantially immutable, is, accidentally, subject to change." Here a caution is necessary. When we speak of *substantial* immutability in aeviternity, we do not mean that the substance only of the spirit, and not his operations, is changeless. For, after all, the nature of a being is made known by its operations, and it would be hard to conceive a nature tied down by the immutability of its being to an eternal present, while all its operations were subject to change or showed a succession of real instants. It must be understood, then, that a spiritual operation can itself be unchangeable substantially, and yet be subject to accidental variation.

(2) *Applications of the idea of Aeviternity*

First of all let us see how the idea of aeviternity applies to angels who are pure spirits.

According to the principles laid down by St. Thomas, it is clear that aeviternity is the measure of the actual being of angels, whether good or bad. For as we have

seen, although an angel is in his substance immutable, some of his actions may be subject to true changes. In him, therefore, we find verified the definition of aeviternity, that is, substantial immutability accompanied by accidental variability.

But the one uniform measure cannot be applied to all the operations of a pure spirit. "Some of them," writes the eminent Dominican theologian, Gonet, "are measured by participated eternity, others by aeviternity, others by discontinuous time, and others, again, by continuous time. The operations of angelic spirits are many. In the first and highest place comes the beatific vision; and next is the act of self-knowledge and self-love, then the act by which other things are known and loved; fourthly and lastly there is the virtually transitive action by which an angel, whether upon God's command or of his own initiative, produces local movements in corporeal things or some other effect in the world of visible creatures" (*De Angelis*, disp. vi, art. 1, no. 1). We may with advantage fill in the outlines drawn by the learned Dominican.

Firstly, then, the durational measure of the beatific vision is participated eternity. Since it consists wholly in one immutable act its duration cannot be that of time, for time means succession and change. Nor is it quite accurate to say, with Suarez, that it is an aeviternal act, for in the intuitive vision of God, with all therein included, we find absolute stability with no element of any change whatsoever. And further, since this act of intuitive vision is a transcendental act, exceeding the natural capacity of any creature, its only possible measure of duration is eternity, not, indeed, the essential eternity of God, but what is called participated eternity, consisting in an everlasting "now," and deriving from God as an effect from its cause.

In the second place, an angel's self-knowledge, with

its resultant self-love, is produced by a single act, in which there is no potentiality, and which, therefore, can undergo no change. An angel's knowledge and love of himself are always actual. "Being immaterial," says St. Thomas (*Sum. Theol.* i, qu. lvi, art. 2), "he is always the actual object of his intelligence; so by his very nature he is always in the act of knowing and loving himself." But to this natural cognition of himself must be added other cognitions which, though of the same order, are not necessarily actual, such as the knowledge of other created beings; these an angel knows by means of infused ideas upon which he may turn the light of his mind, or not, as he will. So we see that there is here a combination of substantial immutability and accidental change, the measure of which is aeviternity.

The natural knowledge and love of God (as distinct from the beatific vision) possessed by angels follow the same laws as their self-knowledge and love. Being made in the likeness of God, the angel sees God mirrored in his own nature, and loving himself, he is irresistibly drawn to the First Cause of all good and naturally loves Him above all. Since, then, his self-knowledge and love are always actual, so also are his natural knowledge and love of God; these therefore fall under the measure of the aeviternal.

But, further, the immutability of these acts of cognition and love extends also to those acts by which a discarnate spirit is cognizant of and cleaves to his last end. This end ought always, as we have seen, to be God. But some of the angels did not choose Him. On being raised to the supernatural state a certain number of them rejected God's gift, and elected to look for the whole reason of their perfection and happiness within themselves. This amounted to putting themselves in God's place as their supernatural end, and the act of self-

complacent cognition dictating their choice, as well as the choice itself, belongs to that class of irrevocable actions that can only be called aeviternal.

Thirdly, the acts by which an angel has knowledge of other creatures and loves them, inasmuch as they follow one upon another, either because he elicits them as he wills or because they are governed by the course of events, cannot be measured by aeviternity. Their measure must be some kind of time, continuous time in the case of continuous and prolonged actions, discontinuous time, made up of distinct and discontinuous instants, when it is a question, as it nearly always is, of separate actions between which there is no continuous bond.

Finally, we come to those actions which are called virtually transitive, because they are productive of a real effect external to the angel who is the active cause. These can be looked at from two points of view. We may consider them actively, that is, as they are produced in the angel, or passively, that is, from the creature's point of view in which the effect is produced. Considered actively, these operations, just as all other angelic actions, are measured by continuous time if they are continuous, or by discontinuous time if they consist of instants without successional continuity. But considered passively, that is, in the effects extrinsically produced, these angelic actions affect our material world, and are therefore measured by *our* time. I say, *our* time advisedly, because when speaking just now of angels' actions being measured by a *kind of time*, we were referring to a species of duration which has only an analogy with time properly so-called, which is the measure of the movements of material things. St. Thomas is careful to put us on our guard, and though the reason he gives may be doubtful, the distinction must be maintained. "This kind of time (the measure of angels'

operations) is not," he says, "the same as that time which is the measure of the motion of the heavens and of the duration of all corporeal things, the changes in which are the effect of the movement of the heavens" (*Sum. Theol.* I, qu. liii, art. 3). The influence of the heavenly bodies upon terrestrial movement may be left out of consideration; it remains true all the same that the motion of corporeal things and the spiritual movements of angels cannot fall under one and the same measure of duration, for, as St. Thomas says, "their natures are different" (ibid. ad. 1). All this may seem abstract and difficult. It will help the reader if we give a concrete application of it. The devils in Hell have to suffer the torments of fire. Hell-fire may be called eternal, since it will have no end, but its duration is measured by the continuity of its action, and therefore falls under the category of time, properly so-called. But the sufferings of the spirits subject to the action of this fire, though ceaseless and endless, cannot be measured by the same sort of time. The duration of their sufferings is not time properly so-called, but something analogous with it.

We have so slight an understanding of the nature of angels that this teaching is necessarily obscure, yet it will help us to understand somewhat better the condition of human souls in the next life both before and after the resurrection.

Before the resurrection, men's souls, being separated from their bodies, are, practically, pure spirits, and are, therefore, subject to the same measure of duration as the angels. Therefore, as their being is unchangeable, their existence consists in a perpetual present and is aeviternal. The beatific vision of the blessed is measured by participated eternity, their natural self-knowledge and love, and their irrevocable choice of their last end by aeviternity, and their knowledge of things external

to themselves by continuous or discontinuous time, just as in the case of the angels.

The resurrection of the body will bring about no change in the duration of the lives of either the saved or the damned. Their bodies will share in the substantial immutability of their souls. Their sense perceptions will undergo no *physical* alteration, but will share in the permanence of their suffering or their bliss. Everything will be, as it were, spiritualized. The reunion of souls with their bodies, and the passing of souls from Purgatory into Heaven, will simply constitute two of those instants which are the accompaniments, though not the measure, of aeviternity. In short, it all comes to this: the nearer that souls and risen bodies approach, by their degree of glory, to God's immutability, the more completely will they be encompassed by the aeviternal. Aeviternity begins at death. But as the soul comes nearer to God, so the stability of its perfection grows. So in Hell there will be, together with the essential aeviternity of life, an interminable duration of continuous instants of suffering and anguish afflicting both soul and body. In Purgatory aeviternity will be accompanied by a similar continuity of suffering, which will, however, have an end, and when this end comes the aeviternity of the holy souls will be perfected and crowned with the eternity of the beatific vision. But in all this there is involved no substantial change in the existence or in the natural operations which are measured by aeviternity; the domain of this measure of duration may be narrower or wider in the soul and in the risen body, but in all cases it constitutes a perpetual "now" in which those are substantially immersed who have passed into the next world.

Conclusion—Reincarnation False

It should be clear that the first section only of this chapter is to be accepted with the certainty of faith. The other two sections set forth merely a rational justification of the first, and their value does not exceed that of theological opinion. At the same time, the dogma that death puts an end to the life of probation is reason enough for the rejection of the false doctrine of reincarnation, so common to-day in Spiritualist circles.

This teaching is really the revival, in a slightly different form, of the Origenist heresy of the apocatastasis. It introduces some subsidiary errors, especially in so far as it holds that man is made up of three elements—a soul, an æthereal body and a physical body. At death, according to this system, the soul, keeping possession of the æthereal body, becomes a "spirit"; its dwelling-place is space, its life happiness for the good, anguish and suffering for the wicked. The unhappy state of the latter is, however, transitory. The infinitely good God will not allow them to suffer for ever. He offers them the possibility of rehabilitation, the chance of making good the past, by means of reincarnation, that is to say, a new life on earth lived in a new union with a physical body.

We cannot stay to discuss the details of this strange teaching, or the arguments by which it is supported, and to show their absurdity. It is enough here to recall the leading idea of this chapter, that death is the end of life; to weigh well the full meaning of this word, *end*, and to remember that this is a dogma of faith, in order to conclude that the reincarnation of souls is a heresy as fully deserving of condemnation as was Origenism.

CHAPTER II

DEATH AND THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

I. *Death, though natural to man, is nevertheless the penalty of sin:* (1) *Man, historically considered, was meant to be immortal;* (2) *Death, however, is natural to man philosophically considered.* II. *The moment of death coincides with the hour of judgment;* (1) *The dogma of the particular judgment;* (2) *The hour of death: real and apparent death;* (3) *Divine mercy at the hour of death.* III. *Psychological explanation of the judgment:* (1) *Judgment a simple illumination of the mind;* (2) *The execution of the judgment and the psychology of the next life.*

There is no real interval of time between death and the particular judgment. Not only is the soul judged at the very moment it leaves the body, but the best psychological foundation for an explanation of the nature of the judgment seems to be provided by the very fact of the separation of soul and body.

I. Death, though Natural to Man is yet the Penalty of Sin

On the subject of death the facts of experience seem to contradict Catholic dogma. St. Paul lays down that death is the wages of sin (Rom. vi, 23), yet it is man's natural fate. A simple distinction solves the difficulty; from the historical point of view death is the penalty of sin, but it is natural to man when his nature is looked at in the light of philosophy.

(1) *Historically considered man was made to be immortal*

Under this aspect man must be looked at as he came from God's creative hands. But it is of divine and Catholic faith that God bestowed upon the first man, in his state of innocence, the privilege of immortality. In the Old Testament we read that "God created man incorruptible" (Wisdom ii, 23), that "God made not death," but that "by envy of the devil, death came into the world" (ibid., i, 13; ii, 24); and that "from the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die" (Ecclesiasticus xxv, 33). St. Paul is equally explicit, when he writes; "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death" (Rom. v, 12); and again, "By a man came death" (I Cor., xv, 21), and finally, "The body indeed is dead because of sin" (Rom. viii, 10).

The gift of immortality is presupposed in God's threat to Adam concerning the forbidden fruit; "For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Genesis ii, 17), which implies that, if Adam and Eve had not eaten of this fruit they would not have died; which Eve shows that she fully understands by her answer to the tempter; "Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die" (Gen. iii, 2-3).

Hence, when the Pelagians taught that, as death is man's natural fate, Adam also would have died, just as all men die, even if he had not sinned, the Church anathematized this teaching as contrary to revelation. The sixteenth Council of Carthage decreed that, "if anyone shall say that the first man, Adam, was created mortal, so that, whether he sinned or not, he would

have suffered bodily death, so that his soul would have left his body, not as the penalty of sin, but of natural necessity, let him be anathema" (can. 1). Later, the Council of Orange promulgated the same dogma of faith; "The first man, by disobeying God's commandment in paradise, lost at once sanctity and justice in which he had been established, and by his offence and prevarication, incurred the divine anger and indignation, and at the same time, death, with which God had already threatened him" (can. 2). The Council of Trent, finally, put the seal of its authority upon this teaching, already received by the whole Church (Sess. v, can. 1).

With regard to the super-added gift of immortality bestowed by God upon man at his creation, and so to say, implanted in his nature, we must be careful not to confuse it with the immortality which is essential to spirits, whether human souls or angels. St. Augustine (*De Genesi ad Litteram*, bk. VI, ch. 25) puts the distinction clearly and crisply when he says that a spirit cannot die, whereas the first man was capable of not dying; in other words, a spirit is absolutely immortal, but Adam's immortality was conditional.

The first condition of God's gift of immortality to man was the moral one of abstention from sin; "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii, 17). But it is probable that other and physical conditions were also imposed, especially the eating of the fruit of the tree of life (Gen. iii, 22). It was sin then that, being a breach of the condition imposed by God, was, in fact, the cause of death's coming among men, and death is both the consequence and the penalty of sin.

(2) *Man, philosophically considered, is naturally subject to death*

By the philosophical consideration of man or human nature we mean that view of him which looks simply at the constituent elements of his being, and leaves aside the question of his elevation to a higher order of things. Now human nature is composed of an immortal soul and a perishable body which, together, form one substantial whole. Therefore, by the very fact that the body is perishable, its substantial union with the soul must some day be broken, and each of the two elements will then go its own way. Death, then, is natural to man. "We call that natural which has its cause in the principles of nature. But the essential principles of nature are form and matter. The formal principle of man is his reasonable soul, which is in itself immortal, and therefore death is not natural to man if we consider his substantial form alone. But the material principle of man is his body, which, being made up of diverse elements, is, of necessity, corruptible; and so, from this point of view, death is natural to man" (St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* II-II. qu. clxiv, art 1, ad 1). Rightly, then, did the Church condemn the teaching of Baius, that, "the immortality of the first man was not a gratuitous gift, but his natural condition (Prop. 78). Notice should be taken of the precision of St. Thomas's teaching in the passage just quoted. If we look at the innate tendency of man's material principle, death is seen to be natural to him, but on the other hand, it does not accord with the exigencies of his formal principle, the immortal soul. Hence the state of separation, while not actually contrary to the nature of the soul, is yet less natural to it. "Other things being equal," says St. Thomas, the "state of the soul is more perfect when in the body than when separated from it, because it is part of a whole,

and every integral part of a material whole is relative to the whole. And although in a way its likeness to God is then greater, it is not so in reality. For properly speaking a thing approaches most closely to God when it possesses all things necessary to its nature as created by God, for then it most nearly images the divine perfection" (*Sum. Theol.* Suppl. qu lxxv art. 1, ad 4). At the same time it would not be exact to say that the state of the separate soul is unnatural or preternatural. With greater accuracy we may word it thus: the state of separation of soul and body, while not natural to man, is yet not contrary to the nature of his spiritual and self-subsistent soul; and when St. Thomas calls it a state contrary to nature (*Cont. Gentes*, bk. 4, ch. 82; *Comp. Theol.* I, ch. 152), he is looking at man from the historical point of view, and considering him as God intended him to be in Eden. We must bear these distinctions in mind when we come to treat of the general resurrection at the end of the world.

II. Simultaneity of Death and Judgment

In the course of our exposition of this truth we shall have occasion to examine certain opinions about the manifestations of God's mercy at the hour of death.

(1) *The Dogma of the Particular Judgment*

It is a dogma of faith that, as soon as a man dies, his soul is judged as to all the good and evil he has done during his life on earth. This dogma has never been defined, but when the Church, in the exercise of her ordinary *magisterium* or teaching authority, declares that a truth is revealed by God, no more is needed to make it an article of faith. The Church's belief in the particular judgment was already explicit in St. Augustine's time. "Souls are judged, writes this great Doctor of the Church, as soon as they leave their bodies, even before

they appear before that other tribunal where they will have again to be judged together with their reassumed bodies and whence they will pass to torments or to glory in the same flesh as they had lived on earth" (*De Anima et ejus Origine*, ch. iv, n. 8).

Some theologians have thought to find explicit scriptural authority for the particular judgment immediately after death. The first of the two principal texts alleged by them is taken from the Old Testament: "In the day of good things be not unmindful of evils; and in the day of evils be not unmindful of good things. For it is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways" (Ecclesiasticus xi, 27-28). Unfortunately, however, verse 28, wherein lies the strength of the argument, is lacking in the original Hebrew. The second passage is taken from the Epistle to the Hebrews, ix, 27; "It is appointed unto men once to die, and, after this, the judgment." Here, however, the best commentators agree that the reference is rather to the general judgment, and this interpretation is indeed suggested by the next verse, in which explicit mention is made of Christ's second coming.

It seems then more accurate to say, with most theologians, that the existence of the particular judgment is implicitly contained in the explicit revelation of the last judgment. Jesus Christ, in his discourses, and the inspired writers put all the emphasis on the general judgment because of the dominant role that Christ himself will play in it. So God's judgment of man is always prophetically referred to the last day to which the manifestation of every man's lot is attached, while the judgment of each individual is included in that of all mankind, then solemnly promulgated. Yet there are clear indications that everyone's account will be settled immediately after death and his fate determined before the last day. It will be enough to notice the most

significant of these indications. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows that the condition of both is fixed for ever; moreover the reference is formally to a condition determined before the general judgment, as is clearly to be deduced from the rich man's words to Lazarus. Equally significant are Christ's words to the good thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii, 43). The word *paradise* here means Limbo, where, from Christ's descent into Hell until his Ascension, the just enjoyed the intuitive vision of God. St. Paul is even more direct: "Therefore having always confidence, knowing that, while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord . . . but we are confident and have a good will to be absent rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. v, 6-8); and again, "For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but unto the purchasing of salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us; that, whether we watch or sleep (that is, whether during life or after death) we may live together with him" (I Thess. v, 9-10). In these passages St. Paul says clearly that the just receive their heavenly reward immediately after death, without having to await the general judgment; their eternal destiny is therefore already determined. Final confirmation of this conclusion is to be found in St. John's consoling account of his apocalyptic visions; "And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them" (Apoc. xiv, 13); and again (xx, 4) he tells how he saw seats, and the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, living and reigning with Christ in the first resurrection, that is during the period preceding the general resurrection, and he adds that in these blessed and holy ones the second death, that is, Hell, hath no power. All of which is an implicit

assertion that, directly after death the soul is judged and its destiny decided.

The argument from the traditional teaching of the Church, which is most explicit from the fourth century onwards, need not detain us. But we may notice one point which shows how solid is the foundation on which the traditional belief rests. As we have said, the eschatological perspective of our Saviour's discourses and the New Testament teaching seems to carry forward all of God's judgments of men to the last day. Hence, some of the Fathers, especially in the East, not perceiving the implicit references to a judgment nearer at hand, concluded that the Judge's sentence definitely fixing every man's destiny would not be delivered until the last day. Yet notwithstanding this mistaken interpretation, all or nearly all of them admit that man's eternal future is determined in some degree at death. As we shall see when treating of Purgatory, the Eastern Fathers found a way of reconciling these two seemingly contradictory assertions; but the second of them is testimony to the solidity of the basis of tradition on which rests the dogma of the particular judgment; for this is expressly taught even by those whom we should expect to deny it. It is part of the official teaching of the Orthodox Church, as appears from Peter Moghila's *Confessio*, part 1, question 61.

Nor, indeed, is it easy to imagine the souls of the dead left in a state of complete uncertainty until the last judgment. It was defined by Pope Benedict XII, in the bull *Benedictus Deus*, A.D. 1336, that the souls of the just are received immediately after death into Heaven, while those of sinners go at once to Hell, which, of course, presupposes an immediate determination of their state by judgment. Hence, therefore, each individual man, as soon as this mortal life comes to an end, must appear before God's tribunal, where his eternal destiny will be decided.

(2) *The hour of death: real and apparent death*

The moment of death is the moment of judgment. We assert that the soul, on its separation from the body, is not kept waiting for even the briefest period of time, before being judged; and this assertion is confirmed by the psychological explanation of the nature of the judgment.

But first of all, the question arises; do we know the actual instant of death? We know that we shall die; we do not know when. But there is still another uncertainty connected with the mystery of death. For modern physiologists death is a process, and a distinction must be made between apparent or relative, and absolute death. In the case of sudden death, or death from an accident, it seems to be proved that this process of dying goes on, even after a man has drawn his last breath; but in the case of death from illness, we have only induction and conjecture to guide us. The continuance of latent life, after sudden or accidental death, is estimated, sometimes, as a matter of several hours; but after death caused by illness, it is agreed that latent life will continue for only a very short time, some seconds, a few minutes perhaps, or half-an-hour at the very outside. We have made this passing mention of this matter, without going into any detailed demonstration, because it is nowadays a much debated question.

(3) *God's mercy at the hour of death*

It is a common theological opinion that sinners receive a special grace for their conversion at the hour of death. At that moment, as Suarez teaches, grace is more than ever necessary for salvation, and in things absolutely necessary for salvation, God does not fail us (*De Gratia* bk. iv, cha. 10). The possibility, the probability that latent life may continue after the last breath has been

drawn, shows how there is still a probable chance of salvation, either by the administration of the sacraments or otherwise, for those struck down by sudden death, even though to all appearances they may not seem to be ready to go before God. Must we go further and admit that God's mercy pursues the sinner even in his last agony, even unto that state of apparent death when he seems no longer to belong to this world? Must we suppose that the Creator and Redeemer of men manifests himself to the sinner's soul and asks him for the last time and clearly to make his choice between God and sin? Some have thought that it may be so, some have said that it is so. We do not deny that such an appeal, occasionally and in extraordinary circumstances, may be made; but it would, in our opinion, be rash to allow that such a special grace is given to dying sinners normally and universally.

III. Psychological Explanation of the Judgment

(1) *The judgment a simple illumination of the mind*

The mode of cognition proper to the disembodied soul is the intuition of ideas directly infused by God. Separation from the body, then, is the requisite condition of this divine action upon it, and the particular judgment is nothing more than the illumination of man's conscience. "At the very moment when the soul leaves the body, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, the scroll of a man's conscience is unrolled beneath his gaze and he has actual knowledge of all the actions of his life. His mind looks upon his past life which is all lit up by a ray of light from God's face; that is to say that, by the operation of God's power, the soul has a clear, intellectual vision of its whole sum of merit or demerit. The divine judge then passes sentence by infusing into the soul the knowledge of the reward it has earned, or

the punishment it deserves, in much the same way as the divine law-giver had impressed the moral law upon this same soul by giving to it, at the awakening of conscience, a natural knowledge of the first principles of morality" (Billot *De Novissimis*, p. 52). A purely intellectual light making known to man at the end of his probation, the action of God his Lord and Judge; an infusion of the knowledge necessary for the right understanding of the actions of his past life, and for the promulgation and, as it were, automatic realization in the soul, of the verdict of justice; in these alone judgment consists. What, then, is to be thought of those descriptive accounts of the judgment, which picture the soul standing before God, terrified by the sight of its evil deeds, comforted by angels, tormented by devils?

Evidently they are not to be taken literally. God makes Himself known in a purely intellectual way, nor does the soul in judgment see Him face to face. The soul's torments, the discussion of its actions, the protecting angels, the reproaches of the devils, all these are merely symbolic expressions of belief in the judgment for the instruction of simple folk. The Bible uses still stranger anthropomorphisms to describe God's dealings with our first parents, and so it was natural for the Fathers to make use of the most striking and picturesque descriptions for the sake of hearers who, having but little education, were more easily moved by the things of sense than by intellectual reasoning. The pictures in the catacombs representing heaven as a house or garden, with the judge seated and the soul shown as a woman standing in the attitude of prayer, paint the judgment in a manner far removed from reality. Yet they symbolize the truth. It is the same too, with the descriptive accounts given by some writers. As symbolic representations they are perfectly legitimate; but we must be careful to take them for what they are, symbols and no more.

(2) *The execution of the sentence considered psychologically*

We have seen that the pivot of the disembodied soul's whole psychological activity is its unchangeable adherence to its last end. The judgment is no more than the ascertainment and registration of the irrevocable state of decision in which death finds the soul. Yet it is not necessary that this immutability of the will should reach its final stage from the very first, in every case. The souls in Purgatory have to suffer some delay, during which they cleave to God unchangeably but indirectly, with mind and heart, until they are crowned with the glory of the beatific vision.

We must also appeal to psychology for an explanation of how souls, after being judged, can *go* to Heaven, Purgatory or Hell. The difficulty arises from the commonly received theological opinion that these are real places, for how can a purely spiritual substance, such as a disembodied soul, "go" to any place? According to St. Thomas a spirit is not of itself localized. An angel by producing some effect upon a material object becomes present in the place occupied by that object. But it does not seem possible for the disembodied human soul to become localized in this way, since most probably it can act upon things external to itself only when united to the body. Possibly we may understand this local presence of the soul in Heaven, Purgatory or Hell as a sort of local determination in the intellectual order, in so far as the knowledge of individual objects by the soul is restricted to the things contained in the place to which God's justice has assigned it, and to the events that happen therein. In this way the place would become the soul's own special dwelling-place.

These explanations, drawn from the pure fount of Thomist theology, show how necessary it is wholly to distrust the imagination if we would judge soundly the realities of the other world.

CHAPTER III

HELL—DOCTRINAL TRUTHS

I. *Truths of divine and catholic faith:* (1) *Revelation of an eternal punishment;* (2) *Eternity in Hell the punishment in store for sinners who die impenitent;* (3) *The two pains of Hell:* (a) *Pain of loss;* (b) *Pain of sense;* (4) *These truths are taught by the authority of the Church.* II. *Truths theologically certain:* (1) *Sufferings proportional to the gravity of sins;* (2) *The pains of Hell constant; their mitigation according to* (a) *St. Thomas and St. Francis of Sales;* (b) *Duns Scotus;* (c) *Those who admit the utility of prayers for the dead;* (d) *Those who hold a progressive and indefinite diminution.* III. *A truth commonly accepted; the reality of hell-fire;* (1) *What is meant;* (2) *Proof from* (a) *Scripture;* (b) *Tradition;* (c) *Teaching of theologians.*

The concluding observation of the preceding chapter must guide us also in the exposition of Catholic belief regarding Hell and its eternity. To this subject we shall devote three chapters. In the first we shall expound the truths of doctrine; in the second we shall give a theological explanation of them, and in the third we shall treat them from the point of view of apologetic.

As regards the truths of doctrine, we have pointed out elsewhere, (*L'Enfer et la règle de la Foi*, Paris, 1921) that the Church's teaching on Hell includes three kinds of truths, namely, truths of divine and Catholic faith, to deny which involves the sin of heresy; truths theologically certain which cannot be denied without a grave

sin of error; and a commonly accepted truth which cannot be denied without a grave sin of temerity.

I. Truths of Divine and Catholic Faith

Explicit divine revelation and the authoritative teaching of the Church comprise the following points: Hell's existence and eternity; the damnation of sinners who die unrepentant; their subjection to a twofold punishment, namely, the loss of the beatific vision, and some kind of positive torment.

(1) *Eternal punishment according to revelation*

The New Testament clearly teaches the dogma of eternal punishment.

1. Our Saviour Jesus Christ proclaims this truth. The Judge's sentence at the last judgment, as recorded by St. Matthew (xxv, 31-46) makes express mention of an eternal Hell: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (v. 41), and "these shall go into everlasting punishment" (v. 46). In this text, which recalls Daniel xii, 2, the word "everlasting," marking the duration of the punishment inflicted, must be taken literally. It means, not some undefined period of time, but a duration which, though having a beginning, will have no end. The Judge, in passing sentence, sets up a parallel between the destiny of the elect and that of the damned; as the reward is to be eternal, so is the punishment to be. In combating the upholders of Origenism, St. Augustine truly remarked that, if a motive of misplaced tenderness leads to a limitation of the full meaning of the sentence of damnation, logic will compel us also to deny the eternity of the reward (*Ad Orosium*, ch. 8). Moreover, Christ Himself, elsewhere in the Gospels, so strongly emphasizes the eternity of Hell that no room is left

for doubt. He indicates the torments of the damned by such expressions as, "the fire that is not extinguished," and "the worm that dieth not." It would not be easy to find anything stronger or more terrifying even than His warning threat: "If thy hand scandalise thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into Hell, into unquenchable fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished" (Mark ix, 42-43). Thrice does He utter this warning; wherefore such insistence upon the unending pains of Hell if the reality falls short of the threat?

2. The Apostles are as explicit as their Master. St. Peter (II Peter ii, 9) recalls the punishment inflicted upon the rebel angels; so likewise shall the wicked be chastised in the day of judgment. According to the literal meaning of the Greek words he says that the unjust are reserved to the end of the world unto a judgment which will not put an end to their torments, but will rather put a seal upon them and give them permanence.

St. Jude threatens the wicked who deny Jesus Christ with eternal chains and darkness, and twice repeats this threat of eternal punishment (v. 6-7-13).

According to St. Paul, eternal punishment will be meted out to the persecutors of the Church (II Thess. i, 5-9), and the loss of the kingdom of God will be the punishment of sinners (I Cor. vi, 9; Gal. v, 19-21; Eph. v, 5). The Apostle preaches also the existence of two camps for ever irreconcilable (II Cor. vi, 14-16), of two eternal alternatives (Rom. ii, 2-12), one of which is judgment and eternal reprobation (Heb. vi, 2-7; ix, 27; x, 27-31). Finally, St. John in the Apocalypse often refers to Hell and its torments, which he describes in a material but impressive fashion. Hell is depicted as an abyss of fire, a furnace giving forth clouds of sulphurous smoke; and the everlasting duration of these

punishments is explicitly asserted; "And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever" (xiv, 11), and they "shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever" (xx, 10).

(2) *Eternal punishment the lot of unrepentant sinners*

According to God's law sinners who die in a state of unforgiven mortal sin will be condemned to Hell for ever. In the passage quoted just now from St. Mark's gospel (and in the parallel text in St. Matthew, xviii, 8-9) our Lord warns us to beware of scandals; if hand, foot or eye be an occasion of sin, it must be cut off or plucked out to save us from Hell. Is not this as much as saying that every grave sin leads to Hell? And not only the sin that is committed outwardly, but also the hidden sin of desire shall be punished by gehenna(Matt. v, 28). The sins capable of being forgiven in the next life (Matt. xii, 32; Mark. iii, 29) are not grave sins, but lighter faults that a purifying fire will wash away (I Cor. iii, 11-15). On the other hand, the words of our Lord and Judge at the last judgment can not be alleged as proving that those alone will be damned who do not practise works of mercy (Matt. xxv, 41). As Maldonatus well shows in his commentary on these words, our Saviour mentions the works of mercy simply as examples; and what is true of one sin is true of all without exception. Should there remain any doubt on this point, two quotations from St. Paul would effectively dissipate it. "Know you not," he writes (I Cor. vi, 9-10), "that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God? Do not err; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liers with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God." This list of all sorts of crimes and deadly sins shows that no exception is to be made. Writing to the Galatians (v, 19-21)

he says the same thing and gives a similar list, adding the more general warning; "Of the which I foretell you . . . that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." Certainly, as long as life lasts, the sinner may obtain from God's mercy the forgiveness of his sins. But this is granted only to those who do penance; "Except you do penance you shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii, 5). Whenever, then, Scripture speaks of works of beneficence and charity (Tobias iv, 11; Daniel iv, 24; I Pet. iv, 8; James v, 20) and of the forgiveness of injuries (Matt. vi, 12; 14-15; Luke xi, 4) as meriting from God the pardon of our sins, we must always understand that sincere repentance is pre-supposed as a necessary condition, and consequently, whatever good works a man may have done, if he dies with an unforgiven mortal sin on his soul, he will go to Hell.

(3) *The twofold punishment of Hell*

One further truth is included in the Catholic dogma of Hell, namely, the existence of a twofold penalty, known as the pain of loss, and the pain of sense.

(a) The pain of loss, which is the essential pain of Hell, consists in the loss of the beatific vision. The revelation by God of this punishment is necessarily included in the revelation of an eternal Hell. But it is also mentioned explicitly in the New Testament. "Depart from me you cursed" (Matt. xxv, 41) is the sentence that will by spoken by the Judge at the last day, and which will cast the wicked into exile far from Heaven. In our Lord's parables wherein He limns for His hearers the eternal perspectives of Heaven and Hell, He expresses this exile from God under many forms. The master of the house will not allow the workers of iniquity to come in; while Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets will be welcomed into the kingdom of God, sinners will be shut out (Luke xiii, 27-28; Matt. vii, 23; xxv, 12);

between the saved and the damned there is put a great chaos so that none can pass from Hell to Heaven, or from Heaven to Hell (Luke xvi, 25). The pain of loss is indicated also by "the exterior darkness" into which are cast the guests who are not clothed with the marriage garment, that is, sinners bereft of sanctifying grace, and the unprofitable servant who is the type of the unfaithful Christian (Matt. xxv, 30), and, finally, the children of the kingdom, the Jews who, though the first to be called, were, through their blindness of heart, for ever cast out (Matt. viii, 12).

Christ's words are echoed by the Apostles. We have already noticed how St. Paul shuts out from the heavenly kingdom all sorts of sinners. The Apocalypse likewise bears witness to the eternal separation of the damned from God. All whose names are not written in the book of life will be delivered to damnation, which is indeed a second death (ii, 11; iii, 5; xx, 6, 12-15; xxi, 8, 27), entailing the loss of divine life, but not involving annihilation (xxi, 8, 27; xxii, 15). On the other hand Heaven is a place of glorious brightness; "the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof," but "there shall not enter in anything defiled, or that worketh abomination or maketh a lie," and "without are dogs and sorcerers, and unchaste, and murderers, and servers of idols, and every one that maketh and loveth a lie (xxi, 23, 27; xxii, 15).

(b) Most of the scriptural references to Hell contain an allusion to another sort of punishment. Christ and the Apostles speak of unquenchable fire, the gnawing worm, of torments and flames, of the bottomless pit whence arises the smoke of fire and brimstone, etc. We are not dealing here with the theological question of the nature of the pains thus indicated, but simply wish to point out that, besides the loss of eternal happiness, Hell involves the infliction of some positive punishment, which is

traditionally known as the pain of sense. This name does not necessarily mean that the pain is felt in the organs of sense, for the devils (and men's souls also until the resurrection) have no sense faculties, but yet suffer this pain. From the dogmatic point of view then, this pain is simply a positive punishment inflicted upon the damned by God, additional to the pain of loss, by means of some instrument called, in Scripture, fire. For the moment we say nothing of the nature of this instrument; the only thing that appertains strictly to faith is the existence of some positive torment distinct from the pain of loss.

Already in the Old Testament we are given a clear vision of the pain of sense. The prophet Isaias (lxvi, 24) speaks of "the fire that shall not be quenched," and the phrase is repeated in the book of Judith, xvi, 21 (Cfr. Ecclesiasticus vii, 19). Our Blessed Lord borrows the expression from Isaias in the passage quoted above, where He tells us that, if the eye be an occasion of sin it is better to pluck it out, or if hand or foot scandalize us, it is better to cut it off than to go into Hell where the fire is not extinguished. The parable of the cockle ends with an allusion to Hell-fire (Matt. xiii, 40-42); the rich man cries out that he is tormented in the flame (Luke xvi, 24); the Judge at the last day utters the same terrifying sentence; "Depart from me . . . into everlasting fire." We find the same teaching in the epistles; St. Jude (v. 7, 23), St. Peter (II Pet. iii, 7), St. James (iii, 6), St. Paul (II Thess. i, 8; Heb. x, 27). The Apocalypse, as we have seen, is full of realistic descriptions. It is true that the meaning of these revelations is not so clear and evident that the existence of a real fire in Hell must be held as a dogma of faith, but they leave us in no doubt whatever as to the existence of some positive punishment distinct from the pain of loss.

(4) *These three truths are taught by the Church's infallible authority*

1. We have already seen that the Church always taught as a dogma of faith that death finally fixes man's free moral choice of his last end, and that she, therefore, rejected the contrary heresy of Origenism. But this dogma necessarily includes that of the eternity of Hell, as appears from the wording of Justinian's ninth anathema, approved and subscribed by Pope Vigilius and the whole episcopate: If anyone shall say or think that the punishment of the devils and the wicked will not be eternal, but that it will have an end, and that then there will be an "apocatastasis" of the devils and the wicked, let him be anathema. In the face of this public proclamation of the Church's teaching, little notice need be taken of some occasional passages, obscure in meaning or of doubtful authenticity, taken from the works of St. Ambrose, St. Gregory of Nazianzum and St. Gregory of Nyssa, especially as, in other places, these Fathers teach quite clearly the doctrine held by the whole of Catholic Tradition

All impenitent sinners go to Hell.

2. On this second point of Catholic teaching the fifth century saw the rise of a school of thought which attempted to mitigate the traditional doctrine. According to these writers, who were nicknamed the *misericordes* or merciful, only infidels, unbelievers and obstinate heretics would suffer in Hell for ever, while unrepentant sinners who were numbered among the faithful would be saved after doing penance for a time. It would seem that even St. Jerome adopted this opinion; but the authentic teaching of the Church is not involved in the erroneous opinions of any individual Father or Doctor. The distinction between unbelievers and believers drawn by these writers has no justification in Scripture

and is without authority in Catholic tradition. Against this heretical aberration St. Augustine was the great champion of orthodoxy and is the faithful witness of Catholic thought. The Church's true doctrine has been more than once authoritatively proclaimed; in the second Council of Lyons (1274) the confession of faith submitted to and subscribed by Michael Paleologus lays down that, "the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin, or in original sin only, go down at once into Hell, there to suffer diverse pains"; the Council of Florence (1439) repeats this decree, adding only the word "actual" to the phrase "mortal sin." The adverb *mox* (at once) inserted in these two decrees, appears likewise in the "*Benedictus Deus*"of Benedict XII already quoted by us when speaking of the particular judgment. In this document he defines that the "souls of those who die in a state of actual mortal sin go down immediately (*mox*) after death into Hell," thus condemning the opinion that judgment is deferred, and at the same time proclaiming the Catholic teaching on the matter now under consideration.

3. Lastly the Church has always believed in a twofold punishment in Hell. Although the teaching of the Gospels is, of itself, enough to establish this as an article of faith, official pronouncements are not wanting. Thus Pope Innocent III in a letter to the Archbishop of Arles (1201), inserted in the third book of the *Decretals*, draws the distinction between the deprivation of the beatific vision, which is the penalty of original sin, and the torment of eternal Hell, which is the punishment of actual sin. Moreover, whenever in ecclesiastical documents mention is made of the pains, punishments and torments of Hell, this is equivalent to an assertion of the two pains, of loss and of sense, for the latter is explicitly indicated by the use of such terms, while the former is necessarily involved in every punishment that is eternal.

II. Truths Theologically Certain

A truth is said to be theologically certain when it is deduced from a dogma of faith by a process of reasoning. The certitude thus produced in the mind is not that of faith, though dependent upon it, and the denial of such a truth constitutes the sin, not of heresy, but of error.

With reference to Hell there are two of these theologically certain truths to be considered, first, the proportion between the sufferings to be endured and the sins committed, and secondly, the fixity or constancy of the essential sufferings of Hell.

(1) *Proportion between sins and suffer ings*

God will render to every man, good and bad, according to his works. So declares St. Paul writing to the Romans, ii, 6. The Council of Florence gave an authoritative interpretation to this revealed truth, in so far as the blessed are concerned, when it declared that "according to the diversity of their merits, some will see God more perfectly than others." With regard to the sufferings of the damned the Council defined nothing as to their diversity, but by analogy and deduction we are bound to hold that they will be regulated by the same standard of distributive justice. Sacred Scripture, indeed, indicates this clearly enough (Matt. x, 15; xi, 21-24; Luke x, 12-15; xii, 47-48; Apoc. xviii, 6-7). This doctrine then, so far as the damned are concerned, is not a dogma of faith, since it is not formally proposed by the Church's teaching authority; but it is accepted by all as theologically certain, that is, in theological language, proximate to faith.

(2) *Constancy of the pains of Hell*

The eternity of Hell implies, as a deduction, that its sufferings remain constant. The theory of a progressive

and indefinite mitigation of the sufferings of the damned must be rejected as gravely erroneous. These two assertions need some explanation.

(a) There is a certain mitigation of the pains of Hell that a Catholic may allow. First there is the so-called mitigation taught by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis of Sales. "In the damnation of the lost," writes the former, "there is evidence of mercy, not indeed by way of total relaxation, but by way of partial alleviation, in so far as the punishment is less than is deserved" (*Sum. Theol. Ia.* qu. xxi, art. 4, ad. 1); while according to St. Francis, "these sufferings are much less than the sins and crimes for which they are inflicted" (Treatise of the Love of God, bk. ix, ch. 1). St. Thomas is of opinion that God will accord this alleviation of their torments to those especially who during life were themselves merciful to others (*Suppl.* q. xcix, art. 5, ad. 1).

(b) Some theologians, following Duns Scotus, hold that venial sins, and mortal sins of which the guilt has been forgiven, will not be punished in Hell for ever, because of themselves they are not deserving of eternal punishment. Hence a day will come when, the temporal punishment due to be undergone for these sins having been completed, the damned will experience a mitigation of their sufferings, proportionate to the gravity of those sins for which they were condemned to suffer for a time. However improbable this opinion may seem to be, it may be held without offence to the faith, for it does not imply any mitigation of the sufferings inflicted for those sins which, of themselves, are deserving of eternal punishment.

(c) A few early scholastic theologians, whose opinions St. Thomas records in the Supplement of his *Summa Theologica*, thought that the sufferings of the damned were alleviated by God on account of the prayers of the faithful. The basis of this theory is but very slight;

certain legendary stories, of which the theologian can take no account; some prayers inserted without authority in old missals used by some local churches, a thing of no doctrinal significance; the authority of the second book of the Machabees, (xii, 40) wherein it is related how prayers were offered even for those who had been slain after stealing the votive-offerings from the idols of Jamnia (which does not necessarily mean that they had died impenitent), and lastly some doubtful passages from St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom and St. John of Damascus.

Prayer for the souls of the lost is contrary to the practice of the Roman Church and condemned by all her theologians. In the Supplement of the *Summa Theologica* this theory of the efficacy of prayer for the lost is described as a "presumptuous and vain opinion, without any solid foundation, and moreover not acceptable to reason" (qu lxxix, art. 5). Seeing that this theory proposes only a restricted mitigation, strictly limited to the life of the Churh on earth, since the alleviation of the sufferings of the lost would come to an end with the cessation of the prayers of the faithful, this condemnation of it may seem unduly severe. Yet, in truth, the theory is a very dangerous one. It attacks the very principle of the substantial unalterability of eternal punishment. It implies as admissible, even though exceptional, the hypothesis that prayer for some particular lost soul might be so ardent and so long sustained as to obtain from God the progressive diminution and finally the total remission of punishment. It leads, in fact, to the conception of a more or less tolerable Hell, an idea wholly unknown to Catholic tradition and opposed to the most solidly established theological principles.

(d) Certain modern authors, Protestants for the most part, have adopted this theory under a more extravagant and, theologically, more erroneous form. According to

them the sufferings of the lost may undergo a progressive diminution, according to a fixed and universal law. To avoid the heresy of Origenism they try to make out that this diminution, though going on indefinitely, will never lead to the total abolition of punishment, just as, theoretically, the division and subdivision of a line may go on indefinitely without ever leading to the absolute negation of all quantitative extension. Without troubling about the value of this comparison, in which imagination plays a greater part than reason, and considering only the requirements of Catholic doctrine, we have no hesitation in endorsing Cardinal Billot's condemnation of this theory as temerarious, scandalous and erroneous. Temerarious, since it goes against the doctrine generally held and is backed by no good authority; scandalous, since it opens out an unwonted view of eternal punishment becoming progressively less severe until it becomes bearable, and thus gives rein to our evil passions by weakening our fear of God's judgment; erroneous, since it positively contradicts a truth that is theologically certain. For it is a logical deduction from the dogma of eternal life that the misery of the lost corresponds with the glory of the blessed (Matt. xxv, 46); the saved, as regards the substance of their happiness, are in a condition that is fixed and unalterable, as are the damned with regard to their misery. Otherwise the verdict of divine justice would not be irrevocable, and eternity would not last for ever. Besides, the pain of loss, the deprivation of the vision of God, which is the most terrible of all the torments of Hell, admits of no mitigation; either it simply is, or is not. As for the pain of sense, Christ's solemn words are not to be gainsaid: *vermis non moritur, ignis non extinguitur*. In the hypothesis of indefinite mitigation, what becomes of this worm which, though never dying, grows ever weaker, and of this fire which, though never quenched, is for ever losing its heat?

We need not discuss certain passages from the Fathers alleged by the upholders of the theory of mitigation, notably Petavius and M. Emery, in support of a relative alleviation of the sufferings of the damned through the prayers of the Church. On this point we refer our readers to our book, *L'Enfer et la Règle de la foi*, and to the article *Mitigation des peines* in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*.

III. A Commonly Accepted Truth: the Reality of Hell Fire

An opinion is said to be temerarious when, without denying or casting doubt upon a dogma of faith, without even contradicting a truth that is theologically certain, it rejects without good reason, a doctrine commonly taught by theologians which, though not revealed, at any rate with certainty, yet concerns the religious beliefs or pious practices of the faithful.

(1) *The reality of Hell-fire*

This is a commonly accepted truth which it would be temerarious to doubt or deny. But first it must be noted that to say that Hell-fire is real, is quite a different thing from saying what it actually is. When we say that it is real we do not assert that it is a corporeal or material thing like our earthly fire. Even when helped by revelation we have only an analogical knowledge of other-worldly things, since our concepts can rightly express only the proper object of our intellectual cognition, that is the material things of this world. *A priori* then, it may be said that Hell-fire, having an analogy with our earthly fire, both resembles it and differs from it; but how and to what degree we cannot say. Our present question, therefore, does not concern the nature of Hell-fire, but the simple fact of its objective reality. We say, then, that the fire of Hell is a thing distinct from the

lost soul itself, or, with greater accuracy, that it implies the existence of an objective cause really distinct from the pain of sense which is its effect, and in the infliction of which it is the instrument of divine justice. Understood in this sense, real fire is opposed to metaphorical fire, just as the objective cause of suffering is opposed to the merely subjective feeling or affliction of the soul.

(2) *Theological proof of the reality of Hell-fire*

This is drawn from Scripture, tradition and the unanimous teaching of theologians.

(a) As we have already seen, the Scriptures, in speaking of Hell, use such terms as eternal fire, unquenchable fire, gehenna (the very word recalls the fire kept burning in the valley of Gehinnom), a furnace of fire, tormenting flame, smoke of their torments, a lake of brimstone and fire, etc. It seems impossible to take these expressions otherwise than in a realistic sense. Any metaphorical interpretation, which takes the fire to be merely the soul's anguish or remorse, even "an ever gnawing paroxysm of remorse," does violence to the obvious meaning of the words, especially when taken together and read in the light of the beliefs that were universally held by Christ's contemporaries. The hypothesis of a real but simply spiritual fire, put forward by some modern theologians, might indeed be reconciled with the words of Scripture, but is in itself a contradiction, a spiritual fire being metaphysically inconceivable.

(b) The traditional teaching of the Fathers, taken as a whole, provides a weighty argument. Nearly always they speak of Hell-fire in terms that even accentuate the realism of Scripture. For them it is a "hard and bitter" fire, "cruel, unquenchable, unbearable" in which the sinner will burn and be tortured ceaselessly and for ever. They liken it to the fire of this world, or to the fires kindled by God for the destruction of sinners.

Minutius Felix and Tertullian compare it with lightning and volcanic fires. According to St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha is an image of Hell. From the fifth century we find it described as "corporeal," and by the time of St. Gregory the Great its reality and materiality were accepted by all.

It must, however, be noted, that there were some contradictory opinions, especially in the earlier centuries. Origen, for example, maintained definitely a purely metaphorical fire, and Theophylactus followed him; but certain passages from St. Gregory of Nyssa, Victor of Antioch, St. John of Damascus, Lactantius and St. Ambrose are either but doubtfully in favour of a metaphorical fire or are orthodox when read in the light of other assertions by the same writers. The theological explanation of the action of Hell-fire had not yet been worked out, and the prevailing conception was a very simple one; the pain of loss, being wholly spiritual, was referred to the soul, the pain of sense was attributed to the body. True, the Fathers did not always express themselves so clearly, but that was their underlying idea, as is proved by the fact that sometimes they teach that even those guilty of original sin alone will suffer positive torments. Some of them are explicit, as for example, St .Methodius, who thinks that the soul, even before the resurrection, must have some kind of a body, for otherwise Hell-fire could not afflict it; whereas, St. Gregory of Nyssa declares that the human soul, being spiritual, can never be tormented by fire. St. Augustin, summing up the different theories then current on the subject of the "worm" and "fire," finds the difficulty to lie in explaining the action of material fire upon spiritual beings. (*The City of God*, bk. XX, ch. 22; bk. XXI, ch. 9). It would disappear, he thinks, if the hypothesis of the corporeity of the demons could be upheld, but, given

their spiritual nature, we are brought up against a mystery. The conclusion to be drawn from this brief examination of the Fathers' teaching is that, when they are simply setting forth the traditional belief of the Church, they speak, without hesitation, of the fire of Hell, but when they try to explain the action of fire upon spiritual beings, both thought and language betray uncertainty. Only a few of them dealt directly with this aspect of the problem of Hell-fire, which was to be the subject of theological discussion in later days, but it is precisely those few, apart from Origen and Theophylactus who definitely went astray, whose names are quoted as our adversaries.

(c) But even when these errors and uncertainties are duly discounted, it remains true that the teaching of the Church touching the reality of Hell-fire has undergone a certain progress. To-day the moral unanimity of theologians is a fact.

The theory of a metaphorical fire has been altogether given up. In the sixteenth century, the Dominican theologian Ambrose Catharinus, a somewhat daring speculator in matters theological, tried, unsuccessfully, to revive this theory. His opinion was immediately subjected to severe criticism and, by most theologians, rejected as, at least temerarious, if not erroneous. It runs counter, indeed, to the authority of all the great theologians and of all theological schools. The mediæval theologians, especially, always understand the Scriptural word *ignis* in a strictly realistic way. The possibility of a metaphorical interpretation is so remote from their minds, that they rather prefer to give a literal meaning to other words, such as ice, water and the gnawing worm, which are sometimes coupled with fire in the inspired descriptions of the torments of Hell.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a certain number of "theologians" tried to reinstate the meta-

phorical interpretation, but their theological authority was not high enough to win for it a standing in the schools. Finally, in 1890, an ecclesiastical decision was given on this point, which, though purely disciplinary, indicates what is the only authorized teaching. A parish priest of the diocese of Mantua put the following case before the Sacred Penitentiary: "A penitent makes known to his confessor that, in his opinion, the expression 'the fire of Hell' is only a metaphor for the intense sufferings of the damned, and asks whether penitents may be allowed to persist in this opinion and be absolved." The answer was that they were to be carefully instructed, and if they showed themselves pertinacious, were not to be absolved. This indication, together with the unanimous agreement of the great theologians, obliges us to conclude that the reality of the fire of Hell is, at least, a commonly accepted truth, which may not be denied without committing the grave sin of temerity.

CHAPTER IV

HELL. THEOLOGICAL SPECULATIONS

I. *The pain of loss ;* (1) *Its nature ;* (2) *Its inequalities.*
II. *The pain of sense ;* (1) *What the fire of Hell is ;* (2) *How it acts,* (*a*) *upon the soul,* (*b*) *upon the body.*

The certitude produced in the human mind by the acceptance of dogmatic and theological truths, cannot satisfy its insatiable curiosity, always searching for the ultimate reasons of things. Upon the many obscure problems involved in the dogma of Hell our reason can throw some degree of light; but in these matters, which are interesting and intriguing, we are in the sphere of speculation and freedom of opinion.

We have now, therefore, to expound what seem to be the best theological explanations, firstly of the pain of loss, secondly, of the pain of sense.

I. The Pain of Loss

We have to try to solve two questions ; first, we have to explain the exact nature of the pain of loss, and secondly, we have to show how its intensity can vary in different individuals.

(1) *What the pain of loss is*

It is easy to assert, and it is constantly being reiterated, that the pain of loss is the most terrible of Hell's torments, not only because it is, by the nature of things, eternal, but also because, considered in itself, it causes the

most intolerable and inexpressible of sufferings. But it is by no means so easy to prove this assertion.

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, our guide, often explains how the natural love of God as the supreme Good, persists, both in the demons and the lost. (cfr. *Sum. Theol. I*, qu. 64, and *Compend. Theol.* cap. 174.) As we have already seen, in the introductory chapter, discarnate spirits, who know and love themselves with a knowledge and love that are spontaneous and ever actual, have likewise an always actual knowledge and love of God. And since they know God as the Supreme Good, they love Him even more than they can love themselves. But this spontaneous and natural impulse of love is an indeliberate act of the will. The reason of this spontaneous desire of God lies in the fact that pure spirits and disembodied souls apprehend the Supreme Good, not by way of abstraction as we do now, but, as it were, in the concrete. So, just as we, while on earth, cannot love or desire anything except in so far as it is seen to be good, the object of all love and desire, the will of the discarnate spirit is impelled, by psychological necessity, towards the actual, concrete Supreme Good. In a word, the love of God, author and source of all good, is the first and necessary principle of all love and desire in the next world. This natural and necessary love is not extinguished in the lost, but persists as the spontaneous action of their spiritual nature ; it is the ever active motive force of their whole psychological life in all that concerns willing and desiring. Hence there arises in the lost soul a conflict of opposite forces. On the one hand the soul is irresistibly impelled, by its natural inclinations, towards happiness, and so by its spontaneous, indeliberate act, loves God as its highest good ; on the other hand, its free and deliberate obduracy in evil, chosen as its last end, forces it to turn its back on God, the only source of happiness, and the

only satisfaction of its intense desire of happiness. It must not be forgotten that pure spirits, such as disembodied souls, have direct cognition of themselves by an act of perfect intuition. Owing to this perfect and direct self-cognition they comprehend in one single glance all their needs, their aspirations, their destiny, the true object of their beatitude, and also the insurmountable obstacles set up by themselves, which prevent them from satisfying their hunger for happiness and from attaining to true felicity. Since the disembodied soul sees itself directly in its own essence, it knows and experiences all these things with an intimacy that goes to the centre of its being, and hence the pain of loss produces in the lost an interior contradiction that tortures and rends asunder their inmost life; they are impelled towards God and are kept far from Him; they yearn for God and yet repel Him. No more terrible anguish can be imagined than that the soul should be at war with itself in the very act that should bring it happiness; it is a rending of the soul, of which even the tearing of the body, limb from limb, is but a faint and feeble image.

2. It is clear that this explanation presupposes that the damned have definite knowledge of the happiness that would have been theirs from the possession of God as their *supernatural* end. St. Thomas makes the same presupposition when he proves that the loss of the beatific vision of God will cause no suffering to children who die unbaptized. "The souls of these children, he writes (*De Malo*, qu. v, art. 3), are not lacking in such natural knowledge as is due to separated souls according to their nature, but they do not possess supernatural knowledge, which comes from faith. . . By its natural knowledge the soul knows that it is created for happiness, and that this lies in the possession of the supreme good; but that this perfect good, for which man is made, is the glory of the saints, is something that cannot be known

naturally. . . . Hence the souls of these infants will not know that they are deprived of so great a good, and consequently will not suffer from the deprivation." The damned, then (apart from infants) will have supernatural knowledge of what ought to be, and what otherwise would have been their true happiness. Faith, therefore, intervenes and completes the natural, spontaneous movement of the will towards God actually envisaged as the supreme good. But, as we shall see, the action of faith is in the speculative order only, while in the practical order, the will persists in its adherence to an end contrary to its true last end. The illumination of faith is the result of grace received during this life, which to some is given more abundantly, to others less copiously ; moreover it is not impossible that, at the very moment of death, God may specially enlighten the soul as to its true happiness. Hence it comes about that they who, in this world, were the more highly favoured by God's mercy, will, in the next, be more deserving of reprobation, and, as a consequence of their higher degree of knowledge, will have to endure a more terrible anguish of soul.

3. Here the question arises, how is it that the lost soul, borne down by so great a weight of suffering and torment, does not retrace its steps and choose anew its last end, in accordance with the perfect knowledge of it which it has now gained ? The fundamental reason we have given already; the choice of their last end by discarnate spirits is definitive and irrevocable. It proceeds, not from a conjectural, but a certain knowledge, certain and comprehensive in what regards itself and its own nature, and, because of divine revelation, certain with regard to supernatural beatitude. So, once the lost soul has made its choice, it cannot turn round and choose the opposite. For the rejection of its supernatural end by the lost soul results, not from any defec-

tive knowledge of the supernatural as true, but from a defective consideration of it under the aspect of the "good." Now if it were possible for the supernatural to move the will to make a fresh choice, it would be because it could attract it as its supreme good; but it is precisely under this aspect that the lost soul shut its eyes upon its true supernatural end, and chose to look only upon its own native excellence; knowing the supreme good, it voluntarily blinded itself to its supreme desirability, and refused at all costs to follow after it; *averterunt voluntarie suum intellectum, non a consideratione veri, sed ab inspectione boni in quantum est bonum, quia nolunt illud sequi* (St. Thomas, *Comment. in Tract. de Nominibus Divinis*. bk. iv, lect. 19).

Hence throughout eternity the lost soul's moral life is governed by this act whereby it rejected the sovereign good as its last end. And we must remember also that this act, proceeding from the soul's certain, intuitive and comprehensive knowledge of itself, admits of no succession of phases, but is always indivisible and self-identical, and consequently unalterable.

Plunged in the torments of Hell the lost are condemned to undergo a suffering that, probably, had never suggested itself to them before their damnation; even natural happiness is denied them. They had hoped at least to find some satisfaction in their own natural powers and qualities, but the cruel and bitter reality teaches them that this is impossible. But their misery cannot produce in them a change of will. Their wills being always under the sway of the practical judgment they had formed of their own self-sufficiency, to the exclusion of supernatural beatitude, they must for ever will, even in their sufferings, what they willed from the first moment of their revolt against God. To give us some idea of how this can be, St. Thomas uses the illustration of a criminal intent upon murder, who is for-

cibly prevented from committing it. He is tortured by his powerlessness, yet persists in his criminal desire. So also with the damned; they see now that their act of proud independence has brought them misery instead of happiness; yet they cling to their pride and independence, which they value above all. Their only regret is not to have found therein the happiness they had looked to find; their misery goads them to despair. But they do not feel sorrow for the moral evil of their sins, which would be the beginning of repentance. They feel the misery of their sufferings and remorse for their sins as the cause of torments so terrible. Their wills still cling to the moral evil, and the only effect of their punishment is the anguish of soul that it produces, their only repentance that of the slave under the lash.

(2) *Different degrees in the pain of loss.*

According to the Thomistic theology the reason for inequalities of suffering is to be found in the cause of the suffering, that is in the greater or lesser gravity of the sins for which the suffering is incurred. He who has more grievously sinned against God will incur a greater penalty, and the pain of loss will weigh upon him more heavily. But how explain that there can be degrees in the pain of loss? In so far as it is the deprivation of the sight of God it admits of no degrees, but is absolute and invariable; but the intensity of the suffering it causes is, in itself and intrinsically, variable according to the gravity of the sins committed; the more heinous the sins, the more intense the suffering. But to say this is merely to skim the surface of the difficulty; we must go deeper.

We cannot do better than quote from the well-known *Cursus Theologicus* by the Carmelites of Salamanca:

"We can understand that the pain of loss is increased in proportion to its cause, that is the sins committed;

the more numerous and grievous are the sins, the more grievous and more intolerable will be the deprivation of the beatific vision, and vice versa. Nevertheless we do not assert that the greater malice of the sins is the formal reason of the greater degree of suffering, for strictly speaking the punishment is not increased just because it is inflicted for more grievous sins. But we say that the greater gravity of the sins and the increased degree of the punishment are so correlated that the deprivation of the vision of God becomes of itself the true and intrinsic cause of the greater suffering.

How is this to be explained? How, indeed, is it possible, since we are dealing with a privation which, by its very nature, implies the total loss of the contrary perfection?

To get some idea, it must first be noted that he who is deprived of some perfection is thereby removed and sundered from the state of perfection which otherwise he would have attained. So it may be said that a privation is greater according as there results from it a greater distance from the opposite state of perfection. Now this distance increases according to the increasing difficulty which, owing to the nature and number of intervening obstacles, attends the attainment of the contrary perfection. But it is precisely their sins that are the impediments and obstacles preventing the damned from attaining to the beatific vision. Hence, the greater the number and gravity of the sins, the greater is the distance separating the damned from God, and the greater the loss of the vision of God. Some analogy may be found in the privations which afflict us in this life, for example, in exile from home and country. For though banishment must necessarily, and in every case, shut a man out altogether from life in his own country, yet the more distant his place of banishment is, the harder to bear does his exile become, because his return home

is made more difficult. Similarly, blindness, however it may arise, is the total deprivation of sight . . . and yet it becomes a much more grievous affliction when there is no hope at all of a cure . . . And so it is that the loss of Heaven is a greater punishment and a greater misery for the sinner who is deprived of eternal happiness because of many and very great sins, than it is for him who is damned for but a few and less grievous sins" (*De Virtûs et Peccatis*, disp. xviii, dub. 1).

II. The Pain of Sense

The two points to be here considered are the nature of the fire of Hell, and its mode of action.

(1) *Nature of Hell-fire.*

As we have said, the reality of Hell-fire cannot be denied without offence to the faith. But to say that it is real is altogether different from saying that it is of the same nature as the material fire of earth. The scholastic theologians and some moderns think that there is no essential difference between the two kinds of fire, and their opinion is by no means without foundation. "It has not been defined," writes M. Brassac, that the fire of Hell is material. . . Yet it must not be forgotten that the word fire, or flame, is used to designate it at least eight times in the Gospels, and thirty times in the New Testament as a whole. This would not be understandable unless the torment of fire, the most terrible we know, had a close connection with the torment of Hell, and were the best fitted to give us an idea of its severity" (*Manuel Biblique*, 1908, t. iii, p. 590). While granting this notion of a close connection, we may add that earthly fire ought not, it seems, to be taken as a complete representation of Hell-fire. For, according to Scripture itself, there are striking differences between the two;

the fire of earth is produced by chemical action, the fire of Hell is kindled by the anger of God; the one cannot touch the soul except by acting upon and through the body, the other attacks the soul directly and immediately; the one may be quenched, the other can never be; the one gives light, the other gloom and darkness; the one burns and consumes, the other burns but destroys not its victims.

We think, therefore, that both reason and revelation are better served by not asserting that the two fires have the same specific nature. Provided that we safeguard the reality of Hell-fire, there is no reason why we should not take even its nature as being simply analogous with that of earthly fire, and this opinion seems likely to become more and more common among theologians. It is not a new opinion; it was propounded explicitly by Lactantius and St. John of Damascus, and St. Thomas, defending the latter, says; "He does not altogether deny that the fire of Hell is material; he says it is not material in the same way as our fire is" (*Supplem.* qu. 97, a.3). The Dominican, Père Hugon, uses almost the same words: "This fire is not metaphorical; it is real, but this is not to say material like our fire" (*Réponses théologiques*, p. 205), and similarly Passaglia; "In affirming the reality of Hell-fire, we do not say that it is the same as the fire of earth." We agree then fully with Fr. Hurter (*Theol. dogmat.* t. iii, no. 799)when he says that the fire of Hell differs from that of earth both in its nature and in its properties, *natura et indole.*

(2) *The mode of action of Hell-fire*

We shall consider firstly, how Hell-fire acts upon pure spirits and disembodied souls, and secondly, how it will act upon the bodies of the damned after the resurrection.

(a) Pure spirits and disembodied souls.

On this point two principal currents of opinion divide the theological world; the one, going back to St. Augustine, holds that the fire of Hell exerts only a subjective or moral action upon the soul, the second adopted by St. Thomas, maintains that its action is physically effective.

The former opinion, then, denies that there is any real contact between the fire and the soul. The fire is there but does not act directly upon the soul. Yet it causes the soul to suffer, either because the soul is aware of its presence and its injurious qualities (*Albertus Magnus*), or because it fears its attacks (*St. Bonaventure*), or because its mere proximity to the soul is distasteful (*Egidius Romanus*); or again because the soul's attention is so wholly concentrated upon the fire that its liberty of thought is fettered and its intellectual freedom shackled, thus causing it acutest misery, and this either because such concentration of the attention is natural (Richard of Middleton, Biel, Ockham), or because God by some special intervention imposes this torturing immobility of thought upon the soul (Scotus). St. Thomas rejects all these explanations. "Others say, he writes, that, although corporeal fire cannot burn the soul, yet the soul apprehends it as injurious and hence is afflicted with pain and fear . . . but in that case the soul would not suffer from the fire in reality, but only in its subjective apprehension, and although a false imagination may cause real suffering, as St. Augustine points out, yet it cannot be said that the suffering is caused by the thing imagined, but by its image. Besides, this sort of suffering would be more unlike real suffering than that caused by an imaginary vision, because the latter is inspired by true concepts within the soul, and the former by false ideas produced by the soul in error. Lastly it is not probable that disembodied souls or demons, whose acuteness of intellect is great,

would think that corporeal fire could really harm them, if it were, in fact, incapable of doing so" (*Suppl.* qu. 70, art. 3).

We must, therefore, allow that the soul, even when separated from the body, is attacked directly and physically by the fire of Hell. If the fire, as the instrument of divine justice, acts by the power of God, and can act upon the soul, in the same way as the sacraments produce the effect of sanctification in the soul, then it must also have its own proper and natural effect upon the soul. For every instrument performs a two-fold action, first its own natural action of which it is the principal cause, and secondly its instrumental action, of which the proper action is, as it were, the preparation. Thus in baptism the water must first wash the body before cleansing the soul. But a material thing cannot act upon a spirit, or injure it, or afflict it in any way, unless the spirit be in some way united with it. Now, there are two ways in which spirit may be joined with matter. First, as its substantial principle, so as to form one substance, as the human soul does with the body; but of course, there can be no such union between a lost soul and the fire of Hell. The second way is by the application of power, as when a spirit exerts its power to move some particular material thing and no other; it is then united with the thing moved by it. But though it is naturally possible for a body to be the recipient of the power put forth by a spiritual agent, it is not naturally possible for it to hold fast this power to itself, for the spiritual agent is always naturally free to withdraw it from one thing and apply it to another. Hell-fire, then, besides its own natural power of being the recipient of the force exerted by the spirits in Hell, has, as the instrument of divine vengeance, been endowed with another power, that of holding fast and gripping the spirit's energy, of forcing it to act, and, as it were, chain-

ing it down to this one work. In this way the fire becomes a torment to the soul, making impossible the exercise of its freedom, preventing it from acting where and as it wills. This theory allows room for that intellectual torture which is the central point of Scotus's solution, but it is more complete than his theory in so far as it offers as the psychological reason for the sufferings of the lost, the hypothesis of the physical captivity—*alligatio*—of the soul by the fire. It must be noted that we are not speaking simply of the imprisonment of the soul in one locality, which would be something intrinsic to the soul's action, and which is allowed by all theologians; St. Thomas's teaching goes deeper than that, it involves the fettering of the lost soul's faculties by a power which grips them at the centre and paralyzes their activity at the heart. Mysterious indeed is this fire of Hell which thus enfolds, penetrates and torments even the spiritual powers of the lost. This is something very different from simple imprisonment, which is but an external affliction, for by the fire of Hell the damned are tortured in the very heart and centre of their vital powers. Hence the devils, even when outside of Hell itself, carry with them the pain of fire and suffer as truly as when imprisoned in its depths.

(b) Action upon the bodies of the damned.

The action of Hell-fire upon the bodies of the damned, after the resurrection, is, perhaps, still more of a mystery. On the one hand we have to admit that the fire burns the body without consuming it, and on the other, we have to explain the incorruptibility both of the fire and the body.

As regards the first point, the scholastic theologians give no satisfactory explanation. Some moderns try to solve the difficulty by excluding all chemical alteration from the action of the fire of Hell and limiting it to merely physico-mechanical movement. We refer the

reader to Fr. Tournebize's monograph *Opinions du jour sur les peines d'outre-tombe* wherein this hypothesis is given favourable consideration. We shall content ourselves with observing that Hell-fire is the instrument of God's power, and that its nature and qualities must naturally correspond with the high office for which it is made. Its incorruptibility is a good reason for not thinking of it as just the same as the fire of this world.

As for the second point, St. Thomas says that God will use the fire of Hell to produce upon the bodies of the lost, not material, but quasi-spiritual impressions—*passiones animae*. Moreover, after the resurrection, the body will possess an intrinsic principle of incorruptibility. Hence St. Thomas's suggestion might be completed by the modern scientific hypothesis of a fire acting solely by physico-mechanical motion, without any chemical combinations whence could arise alteration and corruption. In this way the bodies of the damned, kept in unceasing movement under the fire's action, suffer a sensation akin to that of burning, and yet are not consumed.

Whatever solution we adopt, we must always make allowance for God's intervention, the nature of which eludes us; and even if the scientific explanation of the action of Hell-fire is beyond our reach, that is no reason for denying the possibility and the reality of this action, of which divine revelation is the witness.

CHAPTER V

HELL FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF APOLOGETIC

I. *The wrong sort of apologetic; Hell made bearable.* II. *True Catholic apologetic:* (1) *The twofold pain of Hell justifiable;* (2) *Objections answered;* (a) *Hell and God's goodness;* (b) *Hell and divine justice;* (c) *Hell and God's mercy.* III. *St. Thomas's axiom.*

Catholic theologians in general, faced with an unorthodox defence of Hell wherein are to be found traces of the ancient heresies of the Origenists and the "merciful," found it not difficult to reconcile God's goodness, justice and mercy with Hell's eternity. But the apologetic propounded by the Thomist theologians seems to rest upon the best and strongest foundation.

I. A False Apologetic

The theories of Universalism and Conditionalism, held by some Protestants, will not detain us. Universalists believe that God's mercy and Christ's redemptive blood will go on working their effects even in Hell, and that, sooner or later, the damned will thereby be converted and set free. Conditionalists admit the impossibility of the ultimate conversion of the damned, but still deny eternal punishment. This is the consequence of their teaching, a kind of compromise between materialism and pantheism, concerning man's nature, which they hold, is composed of three elements, body, soul and spirit. At death the soul perishes with the body; the

spirit, a higher principle, survives but, since it is impersonal, true personality and the individual consciousness are annihilated.

We pass now to the consideration of some examples of a false apologetic for which Catholic writers have been responsible.

Some, under the influence of eighteenth century sentimentalism, carried the mitigation of the torments of Hell so far as to make the life of the damned quite tolerable. The terrifying expressions of the Sacred Scriptures are, for these writers, simple hyperbole the real meaning of which we must try to discover. Moreover the damned do not become radically evil—their actions are not devoid of all moral goodness, and finally their reprobation is not so absolute as is commonly supposed, and their condition in Hell is still preferable to annihilation. Fr. Tournebize thus sums up Mivart's teaching, who in his *Happiness in Hell*, was perhaps the most extreme in his views: "Hell, as depicted by Mivart, differs but little from that described by some recent Protestant writers. According to him the time will come when the torments of the damned will cease and they will no longer hate God; their moral condition undergoes a great and gradual improvement; at last they reach a state of happiness, though, of course, immeasurably inferior to that of the saved. But their banishment far from God no longer oppresses them, either because they are not conscious of what they have lost, or because their abode and its society form an environment suited to their condition. For it is quite possible, he says, that a common and mutual sympathy relieves the weight of their chains, and that they prefer the vulgar circle of actions and desires in which they have freely enclosed themselves, to any higher ideal. In the detested dwelling-place of the damned the sufferings, symbolized by fire, are but slight, and even the most

perverse of its inhabitants are not wholly deprived of pleasure. The most unhappy suffer less than some unfortunates in this world, and definitely prefer their state of reprobation to annihilation" (*Opinions . . . p.* 8-9). We shall not consider in detail the arguments with which the modern "apostles of mercy" try to bolster up their opinions. It is enough to recall that according to the unanimous teaching of theologians, based upon revelation itself, the sufferings of Hell are terrible. We know that the pain of loss will be indescribable torture to the soul, and we know that the pain of sense will not be simply the imprisonment, but the innermost binding of body and soul with chains of fire. Any substantial mitigation of these torments is inconceivable. Equally inconceivable is any moral goodness in the lost, for the root of all moral action is substantially perverted by the unalterable fixity of their wills in evil as their last end. Nor, lastly, is it to be conceived that any act of theirs could bring them true enjoyment. Obstinately cleaving to evil, the damned are not only in a state of aversion from God, their supernatural end, but they are also in a state of positive adherence to another and different end, which, precisely because it is moral evil, tends to the exclusion of God from all their actions and brings upon them the awful pain of loss, which, as we have seen, is insupportable because it robs them of the sole good for which they were created. Undoubtedly their condition is not that of absolute evil, for this would be nothingness, but whatever remains to them of their natural possessions, existence, intelligence, knowledge, will, desires, will serve only to add to their sufferings. The parable of the rich man buried in Hell proves nothing to the contrary. Though he is represented as feeling and speaking as one who has learnt from suffering the consequences of his sins and wishes to save those dear to him from the same fate, we must not conclude

that in this he shows us the desires and preoccupations really entertained by the damned. It is not so, but simply that Jesus, teaching in parables, invests the characters with the sentiments best calculated to convey the lesson he wishes his hearers to learn.

It is sometimes objected that, if the torments of the damned were so terrible, their sufferings would be so overwhelming that all power of action would be destroyed; they would be unable to give their minds to other things, the devils would not be able to tempt men, and the lost incapable of giving a thought to those they had left on earth. St. Thomas disposes of this difficulty in his article on the sufferings of the demons (*Sum. Theol.* I. qu. 72, art. 3). The pain endured by the devils is a real suffering, but differs from that endured by man, who is composed of soul and body. It is not, in the true sense of the word *apassio*, or affliction, which can exist only in a sensitive faculty acting through some bodily organ. The suffering which so absorbs the sufferer as to render him insensible to other feelings and rob him of the power of action is that which acting directly upon his sensitive faculties, through them affects his higher faculties, just as, in the moral order, the impulses of his lower appetites may exert an evil influence upon the determinations of his will. But this does not apply to a purely spiritual being, or to the human soul after death. In them pain is nothing but an act of the will, an effort of the will against everything that thwarts their perverse desires, a struggle to overcome the obstacles in their way. Think for a moment what it is that the lost, devils or men, in their perversion desire. The root and essence of sin is naturalism, the negation of God as the author and the end of supernatural life. The lost, at the moment of their damnation, will and intend this negation, they will it still and always, with the fullness

of all their powers. Consequently, although Satan and his fellows suffer from the frustration of their perverted desires, they would suffer still more if they did not seek the destruction of God's supreme dominion over creatures destined for supernatural beatitude. Far, then, from being prevented by their sufferings from attempting the moral ruin of others, the devils are rather impelled thereby to bring to this work all the resources of their richly endowed natures. The same principles apply, with the necessary reservations, to the souls of the damned.

The starting-point of all this wrong thinking about Hell is the idea of a future life modelled on the lines of life on earth. The psychology is wrong and the metaphysic also; imagination takes the place of reason. If we set up a comparison between the sufferings of earth and of Hell we are sure to go astray; no such comparison will hold because there is no real connection between the two terms. In this life man's will is always changeable, in the next it is immovably fixed in good or evil. While this life lasts the sinner's conversion is always possible ; the will of the damned in Hell is radically and irrevocably perverted. From this fundamental perversity arises the intensity of the sufferings, which are its necessary consequence and which allow of no possible alleviation.

Those apologists who exclude the traditional ideas of anguish and despair from their description of Hell, far from serving the Catholic cause, run the risk of leading the faithful themselves into error, and paving the way to the sin of presumption. For all eternity will it be true that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebr. x, 31), and no subtleties of interpretation, baseless as they are, and designed only to soften the rigour of the truth, can prevail against the words that Jesus spoke of Judas, which apply equally

to all the damned in general and to each and every one of them: "It were better for him, if that man had not been born" (Matt. xxvi, 24).

II. True Catholic Apologetic

The aim of the Catholic apologist is to prove the fitness of a two-fold eternal punishment, and to refute objections based on God's goodness, justice and mercy.

(1) *It is fitting that eternal punishment should be of a two-fold kind*

The sinner not only turns his back on God, his supernatural end, but at the same time and by the same act, attaches himself to some finite and perishable object, which he prefers to God. In reality he chooses himself as his last end and criminally substitutes self-love for love of God. Hence mortal sin has two aspects; it is a turning away from God, and a turning to a creature, the self. Because it is a turning from God, mortal sin, if persisted in until death, entails the pain of loss in the next world. That he who wilfully turns his back on God should be punished by the loss of God, is surely equitable, and since the desertion of God, involved in mortal sin, is of its very nature irremediable, the consequent pain of loss must continue for ever. Even in this life it would be absolutely impossible for the sinner to repair his fault if God did not help him with His grace.

On the other hand, since mortal sin is also the turning to a created, finite object, chosen by the sinner as his last end in place of God, the supreme God and man's only true end, it is right that it should entail the positive pain of sense. There are two reasons for this punishment. In the first place it may be maintained that, man being what he is with his mind absorbed in

material things, the far off vision of the pain of loss would be of no value as a deterrent from sin; only the fear of some positive chastisement, of which he can form some idea from its analogy with the sufferings of this world, is capable of making any impression on him.

But the principal reason for the pain of sense is the expediency of some proportion between crime and punishment. The sinner turns his back on God to cleave to a creature, he takes the love of self as the final end of all his actions; it is fitting, therefore, as St. Thomas says (*Cont. Gentes* III, c. cxliv), that this ill-regulated love for creatures should be punished with some positive punishment through the instrumentality of some created agent. But, it must be observed, the pain of loss is of itself infinite, both because it will last for ever, and because it is the loss of the infinite Good. The pain of sense, on the contrary, is of itself finite, because the misdirected love for which it is imposed, is the essentially finite act of a creature. The reason for its eternal duration is that it is the necessary accompaniment of the eternal pain of loss; if this could possibly be remitted by God, the former would at once come to an end.

(2) *Solution of Objections*

(a) God's infinite goodness and the eternity of Hell. It is said that, even in the case of the incorrigible, the divine goodness must grant some alleviation of their sufferings. God, in His infinite goodness, can never suffer even the guilty to be tormented for ever.

This argument "merely plays with abstractions and turns topsy-turvy the truths both of reason and revelation. God is not only goodness, in the special sense commonly given to this word; He is justice and wisdom; He is infinite perfection. . . To isolate one divine attribute and give to it the fullest effect, to the exclusion of

all His other attributes, is to rob it of its truly divine character, its infinite perfection, because it is, in reality, identical with the other attributes, which are necessarily included in it; it is an implicit contradiction, for the infinite is, at one and the same time, posited and denied. . . . .It is evident that it is not God's goodness, as such, that inflicts punishment, and the most penetrating analysis of God's mercy and love will never extract from these attributes alone the idea of eternal punishment, or of any punishment at all" (P. Bernard, Dictionnaire Apologétique, art. *Enfer*, t. 1. col. 1393). It is, in fact, upon justice, and justice alone, that sanctions depend and the punishment of violations of the law, and by no analysis of the idea of justice can we discover the element of pardon, or the alleviation of punishment.

Furthermore, it is easy to turn this objection against the adversaries who deny the eternity of Hell. For it is, indeed, God's love for men that condemns impenitent sinners to Hell. Is not the fear of Hell one of the most effective means we now have of preserving our souls from sin? This consideration alone is enough to show that God, who wishes all men to be saved, gives proof of His great love for them by His creation of Hell, for it is an efficacious, if terrible, means of assuring their salvation, since it is so powerful a preventive and corrective of the abuses of human freedom. And if, notwithstanding, a certain number of men are, in fact, damned, it is no less true that, with regard to the common good of men, eternal punishment is an institution well worthy of our common Father's love. "There is no good reason," says St. Thomas (*Cont. Gentes*, III c. cxlv), "why, in accordance with the judgments of God some men should not be excluded for ever from the society of the good and punished eternally, in order that men should give up sinning through fear of eternal

punishment, and also that the society of the good may be purified by the exclusion of the wicked."

And what is true in this life by reason of the salutary fear inspired by Hell, is true also in the next by reason of the outrage suffered by God's infinite love for men. How could it be otherwise? God has done everything for man's eternal happiness; He has prepared and offered and given abundant graces; He has given His only Son in sacrifice for man's redemption, and when man rejects contemptuously all these advances of divine love, is he to be punished for but a span of years? This would be an insult to God's wisdom, for it would show that all the proofs of God's love for man were purposeless. The contempt of God's infinite love can be avenged only by a Hell without end. "Do away with eternal punishment," says Père Monsabré, "and that great work of divine love, the Redemption, becomes wholly incomprehensible. In His love and all His works of love God is profoundly wise; but is it wisdom for God to sacrifice His own Son to save us from a punishment that, sooner or later, must issue in eternal happiness? Is it wisdom for God to inspire the martyrs to suffer the most frightful tortures to gain happiness which, whatever happens, they cannot finally lose? Is it wisdom to send forth the Apostles to labour even unto death in order to save the nations from ignorance and vice which cannot rob them of eternal beatitude? Is that wisdom; is it not rather the extravagance of folly?" (*Exposition du dogme*, 96th Conf.).

(b) Hell and God's justice.—How can God punish unendingly a sin which is but the disorder of a moment? True, the injury done to God must be repaired. But where is the reparation if the punishment is unending, if it leaves the sinner unrepentant and does not lead to his amendment? All punishment, imposed in the name of justice, should necessarily conduce to the ameliora-

tion of the guilty, but, if the punishment is never to have an end, this becomes impossible. We must first rid ourselves of an idea that is quite false. It is perfectly true that all punishment is decreed and instituted with a view to our correction, but nothing can be farther from the truth than the idea that a penalty must be inflicted for the sinner's amendment and that unless this be effected the punishment is contrary to law and justice. "It would follow," as Père Monsabré truly observes, "that only well-intentioned criminals who promise amendment should be punished, and that hardened incorrigibles should go scot free; which is absurd. He who does not intend to amend his ways must suffer for his contempt of law and order and duty" (*loc. cit.*). Moreover, eternal punishment, which does not lead to repentance, is legitimate and necessary on account of the grave and direct violation of God's rights involved in mortal sin. As Père Bernard writes (*loc. cit. col.* 1396): "The rights of God are supreme, but it is not enough that they should simply be inviolate, it is necessary that his unimpaired sovereignty should be clearly evident. Sovereign rights that are not effectively enforced in the fullness of their reality and to the full range of their moral power, would be lacking in that perfection that must characterize the rights of God, which are essentially infinite. God's sovereignty, then, must be affirmed and upheld against all rebellion, against every pretender who would destroy or impair it. This is an inevitable necessity, and the repression of rebellion is nothing but the enforcement of law, whereby the insurgent is put back into his own place and made to feel, willy-nilly, the power of the sovereign whom he had repudiated. Thus are manifested God's sovereignty, holiness and justice; thus is God glorified by the sinner himself, and reparation made for the violation of the law. Therefore in condemning unrepentant sinners to

eternal punishment God's action is in perfect accord with his wisdom. "God," says St. Thomas (*loc. cit.*), "does not inflict punishment for its own sake, or because he takes pleasure in it; but he has an end in view, which is to establish creatures according to that order of things which constitutes the well-being of the whole universe." But, persists the objector, there is no proportion between the sin which, being a human act, must be finite, and the infinite penalty of eternal damnation. Here again there is a confusion of thought. Eternal damnation is not an infinite penalty. Infinite and unending are not synonymous. In an infinite penalty, if such a thing were conceivable, there could be no differences of degree, such as, according to Catholic teaching, maintaining a due proportion between the sufferings of the lost and the sins for which they suffer. It was said above that the pain of loss is infinite, both by reason of its endlessness and because of the infinite good that is lost. And this statement far from contradicting what we are now saying, in reality confirms it. For it is precisely because it is the loss of God, the infinite good, that the pain of loss is the same for all and admits of no degrees. The differing degrees of suffering, corresponding to the various degrees of guilt, are on the side of the sufferers, in the varying intensity of their anguish, misery and despair. In this way only does the pain of loss vary according to the number and the heinousness of the sins of which it is the consequence. On the other hand, the pain of sense, as has been pointed out, in itself limited and measured according to the gravity of the sins committed, has only a participated endlessness, in so far as it is the accompaniment of the pain of loss.

It is equally false to maintain, without conditions and due explanation, that there can be only a finite and limited measure of malice in sin, since it is the act of an essentially finite and limited creature. On the

contrary, as all theologians allow, there is a certain infinity of malice in sin. "The malice of mortal sin," says St. Thomas, "is in a manner infinite, because it is an offence against the infinite majesty of God. The higher the dignity of him who is offended, the greater is the offence . . . Since it is impossible that a man's punishment should be of infinite intensity, it must needs be that the punishment of sin should be infinite in its duration" (iii. qu. 1. art. 2, ad. 2. *Suppl.* qu. 100, a.1). Apart, however, from all possible theological discussions as to the infinite character of the offence against God, and even supposing that it is not in itself infinite, it still remains true that God's justice requires that the sinner shall be punished eternally. The offence is measured by the dignity of the person offended; but the value of the satisfaction made corresponds with the dignity of him who offers it. Hence, on any hypothesis, the satisfaction for sin offered to God by a mere creature can never equal the injury done to His majesty, God's supreme dignity always towering high above that of the most perfect and the holiest of creatures. If this is true of reparation by way of satisfaction, according to commutative justice, it is equally true of reparation by way of punishment, according to vindictive or retributive justice. Any punishment suffered by a creature, even if continuing for all eternity and of the utmost possible intensity, can never satisfy the demands of justice by making full reparation for the insult offered by sin to God's infinite majesty.

Then there is the popular form of the same objection, which, however, will not detain us long. Is it just for God to punish a moment's forgetfulness with an eternity of misery? True, the material act of sinning, which may be the result of an instant's culpable forgetfulness, and which is over in a moment, is in itself but a trifle from the moral point of view. What really matters and

what makes it morally evil is the perverse will whence it proceeds. And it cannot be denied that the will, by one single deliberate mortal sin, becomes irremediably perverted. As far as in him lies, he who commits a mortal sin turns his back finally and definitely upon his true last end. This is a total and complete destruction of the principle of order, and the resultant disorder is, of itself, irreparable. Charity is the root of the supernatural order, which is violated by sin, and charity being totally destroyed by mortal sin, man of his own efforts is absolutely unable to make good the damage. For this God's intervention is necessary, and although this is always possible while the present life lasts, it is not possible after death, when, as has been proved, the sinner's will remains for ever fixed in its state of perversion. Hence, it is not true that God punishes a moment's waywardness with an eternity of misery; he punishes eternally an eternal perversion of man's freewill.

(c) Eternal punishment and God's mercy.—But, it is urged, the difficulty remains in all its force. Could not God be merciful to sinners in the next world? Could not the lost rehabilitate themselves by accepting their punishment in a good spirit and by a moral reformation of the will? Would God in such a case still withhold his grace? All this is really an illusion of the imagination. First of all, seeing that the sinner died impenitent, how do we know that his sufferings in the next life will lead him to repent? How do we know that, much as he may hate his punishment, he will also have such an abhorrence for his sins, the cause of his punishment, as will bring him to sorrow and repentance? Regret and repentance are two very different things, and the severest chastisement does not always produce repentance. Now, as we have seen, to dream of the rehabilitation of the damned by repentance, even with the help of God's grace, is to misconceive the character of

the condition of terminal immobility which man reaches at death. According to Catholic teaching, as set forth in our first chapter, death puts man into a state of complete moral immobility; all possibility of merit or demerit passes from him, and he can no longer change his state of grace or of sin. As death finds him, so will he stay throughout eternity. The theological proofs of this truth have already been given. Now from the apologetic point of view, we put it simply as a possible hypothesis, and the mere fact of its possibility renders indecisive the argument drawn from God's mercy. Undoubtedly the theory that God would be willing to forgive may be valid, but if, on account of the radical perversion of the human will, forgiveness be impossible, then God's mercy can do nothing to save the lost. If "having reached the end of the developments of life on earth, the impenitent sinner's free will is bound, by the very fact of his impenitence, with chains stronger and tighter than those forged by the excesses of passion, or folly, or madness in this life," if "by the final refusal that sealed his fate, he hermetically closed his soul against the penetration of grace" (Monsabré), there is no longer any possibility, not only moral, but even physical, of his rehabilitation. "The unhappy man, says Bossuet, is neither in the act nor the habit, but in the state of sin; sin has become incarnate in him, man has become sin" (*Esquisse d'un sermon pour l'ouverture d'une retraite*).

III. St. Thomas's Apologetic

If we are to give a final and exhaustive answer to the objection under consideration, we must, it seems, go all the way with St. Thomas, making our own his teaching in its entirety, as expounded in the first chapter of this volume.

It is not enough to say, in accord with all Catholic theologians, that the reason for the obduracy of the lost is to be looked for in the withholding from them of all grace, actual and habitual. We must go deeper and affirm that God refuses to give them grace because, by the very nature of their state, they are obstinately rooted in evil, and hence incapable of accepting it. This obduracy in evil is, therefore, the cause, not the effect of God's refusal to exercise mercy towards the damned. "With respect to extrinsic causes," writes St. Thomas, "angels are immovably fixed, either in good or evil, once they have made their first choice, because this puts an end to their state of probation; hence it does not accord with the exercise of divine wisdom that further grace should be given to the lost angels, to convert them from the evil of their first aversion from God, in which they unchangeably persist" (*De Malo*, qu. xvi, art. 5). To explain the withholding of all grace, the Angelic Doctor appeals, then, not to God's will but to his wisdom, since the offer of grace would be useless to a will irrevocably fixed in the choice of evil.

On a previous page we have set out the psychological proof of the immovability in evil of the will of the lost. We have also pointed out that the act, by which the soul makes definite and final choice of its last end, is measured by what is called aeviternity. Hence the choice and the love of the last end is not only psychologically unchangeable, but is also an ever present act, so that, however long the future may be, the time will never come when it will be possible for anyone who is damned to retract and amend his choice. This is a physical impossibility over and above the psychological impossibility already explained. The lost will never again have "the time" to start afresh. Having once begun his eternity, the sinner, immovably chained to

evil, clings to it for ever throughout the whole of his never ending present.

This teaching of St. Thomas shows us Hell from a point of view that is too often neglected. It puts before us the very nature of things and enables us to see that the ultimate reason for eternal punishment is not to be looked for in God, but in the lost themselves, in their obdurate will and the impossibility of their disentangling themselves from the net of evil. This is the decisive answer to all objections founded on God's goodness, justice and mercy. "God is too good to condemn me to Hell," is the cry repeated in a hundred different forms. Yes, he is indeed too good to condemn to Hell those whom he created for Heaven, and for whose salvation, in his exceeding love, he sent his own Son into the world. But how is he to release from Hell those whose existence and will are immutably rooted in the eternal "now" of sin? "The punishment of the damned," says St. Thomas again, "would not be eternal if it were possible to convert their will to good. It would be unjust to punish them for ever once they became men of good will" (*Cont. Gentes* bk. iv. ch. 93). It is impossible to turn the souls of the damned once more unto good. Let the argument be well weighed. The punishment of the lost will be eternal, not simply because their wills are in fact immovably fixed in evil, but because there is lacking to them even the possibility of conversion; their state is such that it is morally, psychologically and physically impossible for them to accept the grace of conversion.

CHAPTER VI

PURGATORY

I. *Errors concerning Purgatory:* (1) *Protestant denials;* (2) *Position of the Eastern Orthodox.* II. *The Catholic Dogma of Purgatory*: (1) *In Scripture*: (2) *In Catholic Tradition.* III. *Some theological questions:* (1) *The Pains of Purgatory; is there a two-fold punishment as in Hell; the nature, intensity and duration of the sufferings*; (2) *The joys of Purgatory.*

It was at a comparatively late date that the dogma of Purgatory was defined. Until the thirteenth century the ordinary *magisterium* of the Church was held to be sufficient. But the necessity of definitely settling certain matters of doctrine contested by the Eastern theologians induced Pope Gregory X to require the Emperor, Michael Paleologus, to subscribe to a profession of faith wherein the dogma of Purgatory was clearly set down. Later on, in 1438, when the Council of Florence drew up the decree of union between the Eastern and the Roman Churches, this profession of faith was re-issued in the most solemn form as a dogmatic and infallible definition of the Church's teaching. "If those who are truly penitent, depart from this life in the charity of God, before they have made satisfaction, by worthy fruits of repentance, for their sins of commission and omission, their souls are cleansed by purgatorial sufferings after death; and the suffrages of the living, to wit, the sacrifice of the Mass, prayers, alms-deeds and other works of piety, which the faithful have been accustomed

to offer for each other according to the established usages of the Church, are profitable to those departed souls for the relief of their sufferings." In the sixteenth century, owing to the denial of this dogma by the Protestants, the Church was forced to speak again, and during the course of the Council of Trent, two pronouncements were made. The first was during the sixth session (13th January, 1547), when the following anathema was launched; If anyone shall say that, after receiving the grace of justification, every repentant sinner's sin is so wholly forgiven and the debt of eternal punishment completely remitted, that there remains no debt of temporal punishment still to be paid, either in this world or in the next in Purgatory, before the gates of Heaven are open to him, let him be anathema (Can. 30). Again in the twenty-fifth and last session the Council drew up a decree about Purgatory, in which, summarizing the teaching formulated at Florence, it commands bishops and priests to hold and teach this doctrine. They are enjoined to avoid difficult and subtle questions, which are without profit to piety; to abstain from treating of matters uncertain and false, and to refrain from anything that ministers to superstition and mere curiosity, or that betrays a greed for filthy lucre.

It is in this spirit that we shall here expound prevalent errors concerning Purgatory, the official teaching of the Church, and necessary explanations provided by accredited theology. The question of prayers for the dead, which is more fittingly dealt with in the volume on *The Communion of Saints*, we shall leave aside.

I. Errors relative to Purgatory

Protestants deny the dogma of Purgatory; so also, as far as their words go, do the Greek Orthodox, whose teaching on the subject is somewhat complicated and not wholly free from errors.

(1) *The Protestant denial of Purgatory*

It was only little by little that Luther made known his real views as to the dogma of Purgatory. At first while he professed to hold the doctrine he made it his business to bring it into ridicule and contempt. He held that "Purgatory cannot be proved by any text of the canonical Scriptures" (proposition 37, condemned by Leo X), and that it was the Pope who made of Purgatory an article of faith. In 1528 he still allows prayers for the dead, but looks upon them as mere external practices with no definite object. But in 1530 we find him condemning, in the most violent language, the whole principle of satisfaction for sin, thus, in fact, drawing the logical conclusion from his doctrine of justification. "Purgatory," he writes, " is idolatry, a devilish phantom; it is the most abject of things, vermin, filth coming straight from the Mass, the dragon's tail."

There was no beating about the bush with Calvin, who from the beginning called Purgatory "a fiction of Satan" and did his best to overthrow the traditional belief and practices.

The reasons for denying Purgatory given by Protestant theologians are that there is nothing about it in Holy Writ, that it was unknown to the early Church, and that through the merits of Jesus Christ our sins are wholly forgiven and the punishment due for them remitted. Some modern liberal Protestants hold that the souls of the dead may have to pass through a middle state wherein their purification is completed and they undergo a process of spiritual development until the day of judgment, but this is by no means the same thing as Purgatory with its purification of the soul through suffering and expiation. Their theory is that the soul itself uses its natural freedom for self-purification from evil and self-development in good.

(2) *Teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Churches*

This is much more complicated and difficult to determine, though Mgr. Petit has greatly facilitated the task of the historian of dogma by the publication, in the *Patrologia Orientalis*, of many documents bearing upon the Council of Florence and the question of Purgatory.

1. According to the Greeks there is no Purgatory. But we must note well what they mean by the word Purgatory. To their minds it presents the two ideas of an intermediate place between Heaven and Hell, and of a purifying fire acting upon the soul, and they deny the existence of both the place and the fire. They hold that there is no proof to be found in the Scriptures or in the Fathers, and that the whole weight of theological argument, of reason enlightened by faith, is against the doctrine. Confronted with the well-known words from II Machabees, xii, 46, they admit that they prove the utility and efficacy of prayers for the dead, but not that they imply a belief in Purgatory. The forgiveness of sins in the next life (Matt. xii, 32) is not necessarily effected by cleansing fires, while the parable of Lazarus and the rich man clearly shows that between Abraham's bosom and Hell there is no middle place, but only a vast, impassable abyss. The only text in favour of Purgatory in which fire is mentioned, is I Corinthians, iii, 11-15; the sinner, whose less grievous sins are symbolized by hay, wood and stubble, will be saved, but as by fire. But in reality, as St. John Chrysostom for example, understands the passage, the hay, wood and stubble represent vices which are incapable of withstanding God's searching judgment; yet the sinner will be saved, that is, he will be preserved, he will continue to live, but in fire, in the eternal fire of Hell.

Nor can any explicit teaching be found in the Fathers. As a rule they do no more than affirm that prayer for

the dead is useful and profitable, but that is not to affirm Purgatory as understood in the Roman Church. Those of the Greek Fathers who speak of a cleansing fire are infected with Origen's deplorable heresy, while among the Latins it is either a mere personal opinion, as in the case of St. Gregory, without any authoritative teaching behind it, or else it is just a way of expressing that some sins may possibly be forgiven in the next world.

Further, they argue, it is contradictory to say, on the one hand, that contrition and repentance obtain forgiveness of sin from God, and, on the other, that after the sin is forgiven there is still a debt of punishment to be paid. Baptism forgives sin, and at the same time it wholly remits the debt of punishment; why should Penance be less efficacious? Of the arguments directly attacking the "Latin" doctrine, we need mention only one, which is aimed against the position taken up by St. Thomas. Any hypothesis of a temporal punishment in the next world is refuted by the immutability of the human will after death. For, as St. Thomas says, this immovability of the lost in their clinging to evil is the reason why their punishment in Hell is eternal. Hence temporal punishment in the next world would necessarily imply that the will is not yet definitely determined either towards evil or good; and as this cannot be granted, the doctrine of Purgatory must be rejected.

2. Recognizing that destructive criticism is not enough the Greeks offer their reconstruction of the theology of the future life. Quite commonly they hold that the full reward or punishment is not meted out to the dead immediately after death, but that it will be delayed until the last judgment. The souls of the dead have from the first a clear knowledge of their condition relative to the claims of God's justice. But the just do not begin at once to enjoy the happiness laid up for them as the

reward of their good deeds, nor are the wicked cast down immediately into the eternal torments of Hell. From the hour of death until the day of judgment the souls of the dead are detained in conditions suitable to their moral goodness or wickedness; the just are in Heaven or else in the "terrestrial paradise," their state is one of happiness and they even enjoy the vision of God's glory; sinners are already shut up in Hell and suffer terrible anguish in a condition of inconsolable misery, awaiting the Judge's final sentence and the tortures it will bring upon them. But, at the same time, the just are not yet in possession of those things "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" to conceive (I Cor. ii, 9), nor are the wicked yet plunged into eternal torments and unquenchable fire. All are in a state of expectancy awaiting the definite sentence to be delivered at the last judgment. Hence there is no room for an intermediate state, for any purification of the soul other than that of this life, for any temporal punishment by fire of those who in life have achieved but a moderate degree of virtue. Anything of this sort seems impossible, seeing that the due punishment of the most wicked and perverse of men, and even of the devils, is, as it were, suspended until the end of the world.

3. The explanations of these general propositions offered by the Greeks are of a confused nature, testifying to the difficulties arising from their denial of the dogma of Purgatory. All sinners, for example, are not God's enemies in the same way and to the same degree, and their imprisonment in Hell cannot, therefore, have the same consequences and meaning for all. So we find Mark of Ephesus explicitly admitting, at the Council of Florence, that some souls leave this life in the faith and love of God, yet still soiled and burdened with slight faults or graver sins for which they have not yet done penance. And their place, at least that of the more

guilty among them, is in Hell until such time as the prayers and sacrifices offered for them shall have obtained the forgiveness of their sins. Cardinal Bessarion was even more definite. Between the souls of the elect and those of the damned there is a class of what he called medium souls, who deserve neither Heaven nor Hell for eternity, and who must suffer until their sins are forgiven. In the next world they will have to do penance for slight sins for which they did none in this, and for more serious sins for which their penance in this life was inadequate. The relation between the sufferings to be borne after death, and the sins on account of which they are to be undergone is one of the most obscure points with Orthodox theologians. Yet none of them deny these sufferings. At the council of Ferrara they were described at length by the Orthodox theologians present, who, while maintaining that they are in proportion to the sins, denied that they consist in any positive torment distinct from the soul, maintaining that they are nothing more than sorrow, remorse, shame, unhappiness arising from the darkness of the prison, fear and uncertainty as to the future, the day of deliverance being unknown, anxiety caused by the delay in achieving the beatific vision of God. As for the word "fire," if used at all, it must be taken in a wholly metaphorical sense, and the Fathers speak rather of tears and groans than of fire from which the dead must be delivered.

This deliverance is both God's work and ours, the fruit of our prayers and sacrifices. Belief in the efficacy of prayers and of the sacrifice of the Mass, offered to God for the relief of the dead, is one of the central points of Orthodox teaching, and herein there is perfect agreement between Greeks and Latins; but in spite of this they persist in denying that Purgatory is a middle place between Heaven and Hell, and that fire is the instrument of the sufferings of those detained there.

To sum up: at death all men are either good or bad, sinless or sinful, and therefore destined for Heaven or Hell. But among the sinners a distinction is to be made between two classes, based, not upon the place to which they are sent, but upon their moral condition. Those who die in sin but without despairing of God's mercy, form the class of "medium" souls, whom God, moved by the prayers and good works of the faithful, will one day deliver from Hell and place, among the elect, in Heaven. Thus do the Orthodox reconcile their denial of Purgatory with their belief in the efficacy of prayers for for the dead.

II. The Catholic Dogma of Purgatory

On the actual question of Purgatory it is not difficult to show that between Catholic belief and Orthodox thought there is fundamental agreement. The Easterns will not admit that there is an intermediate place between Heaven and Hell, and deny the existence of a real fire as the means used in the purification of souls. But their denials go no farther. They agree with the Latins in holding that there is a middle state for some who die in sin, who are not holy enough to go at once to Heaven, but who are so far removed from a state of despair and enmity with God that, after a certain period of probation and delay, they are deserving of full forgiveness. There is still closer agreement on the efficacy of prayers for souls belonging to this middle class. But to allow these two points is, in reality, to admit the whole dogma of Purgatory. This is how Pope Eugenius IV, for example, sums up Catholic teaching. "These souls, of the intermediate class, are in a place of torments; but whether they are tormented by fire, darkness or tempest, or by some other thing, is a matter we do not choose to discuss" (Labbe, *Concilia* ix, 491). In

its dogmatic decree the Council of Florence follows the Pope's lead, and, as we have seen, refrains from defining anything whatsoever as to the precise place of Purgatory or the nature of its purifying sufferings. Two things only are established, to wit, the existence of a state of purification for souls after this life, and the efficacy of our prayers and good works in hastening the process of purification. Upon these two points the Easterns agree with us, and hence it is that we say that their denial of Purgatory is a matter of words only.

It remains for us to prove the existence of a state of purification for souls after this life. As against Luther the Church says that this is possible on the authority of Scripture; in addition to which we shall invoke also the authority of Catholic tradition.

(1) *Scriptural proof of the existence of Purgatory*

Many texts are often quoted as proving, at least indirectly, the existence of Purgatory, for example, those which mention fasting and mourning for the dead, such as I Kings xxxi, 13; II Kings, i, 12; Tobias, iv, 17; or again the well-known words of St. Paul about baptism for the dead, I Cor. xv, 29. Leaving these aside, we shall make use of only three passages of greater importance.

The first is the decisive passage from II Machabees xii 39-46. After his victory over Gorgias Judas found under the coats of his soldiers who had fallen idolatrous objects stolen from the temple of Jamnia. Those who had stolen and kept them had committed a grievous sin against God's law, yet the Jews, "betaking themselves to prayers, besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin . . . and making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning

the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them." And the inspired writer adds his approval of what Judas had done; "It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." This passage shows that the dead can be delivered from the burden of sin in the next world, and that there is, consequently, a middle state between Heaven and Hell, in which there are souls not yet wholly purified, with a debt still to pay, and that we can help them, by our prayers, to satisfy God's justice.

The second argument is drawn from the words reported by St. Matthew, xii, 32, where Christ speaks of the sin which will be forgiven neither in this world nor in the next. Whence it follows, at least indirectly, that some sins can be forgiven in the next world, and this implies that there is a penalty to be paid and expiation to be made for these sins in the next life; which is the sum and substance of the dogma of Purgatory.

The third text is taken from I Corinthians, iii, 11, and was used by the Latin theologians at the Council of Florence to prove the existence of the "fire" of Purgatory. Speaking of the last judgment and of the "fire" which will make known the day of the Lord and will prove every man's works and teachings, St. Paul shows the building up of the Christian church at Corinth, begun by his own teaching and carried on by those who came after him. Using symbolical language, he says that the materials employed by these later builders are of different values; on the one hand, they have used gold, silver and precious stones, on the other, wood, straw and stubble; in other words their teaching has been either of the highest worth or of but little value. At the day of

judgment each man's work will be proved by fire; the gold, silver and precious stones will pass the proof unscathed, but the wood, straw and stubble will be consumed, and the careless workmen who used these materials will see their work perish, while they themselves "shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The value of the argument depends, in the first place, upon the exact meaning of the word "fire." Many Protestants understand it metaphorically as the fire of this world's tribulation, but since the Apostle connects it with God's judgment this interpretation cannot be upheld. Neither can it be a question of the fire of Hell, even though the great authority of St. John Chrysostom favours this view. Hell-fire is not a testing fire, while it is a fanciful abuse of terms to understand that the sinner is saved by being simply kept alive by the fire of Hell and not destroyed. Nor is the reference, directly at least, to the real fire of Purgatory as is held by many Catholics, since the fire of Purgatory does not try every man's works, and good deeds, symbolized by gold, silver and precious stones are not submitted to its test. Hence only two possible interpretations of the word "fire" are left; it must be understood either of the general conflagration at the end of the world, or, metaphorically, of the fire of judgment. If we accept the former, and less probable interpretation, we have an indirect argument in favour of the existence of Purgatory, for the fire of the final conflagration would have a twofold purpose, to wit, the death of all those still living, and the purification of those whose imperfect lives still called for some measure of expiation. But what is true at the end of the world must be true at all times and for all men; hence there is a cleansing fire for the expiation of faults committed, the penalty for which has not been paid in full.

But if we accept the latter interpretation, in reality the only really probable one, we must admit that at the

last day there will be a final trial through which all will have to pass, and which will injure those only who, though saved, present to their sovereign Judge works not free from blemish and imperfection. And this, again, is proof, even though but indirectly, of the existence of Purgatory.

(2) *Purgatory according to Catholic Tradition*

This interpretation of St. Paul's words leads us by a natural sequence to the consideration of the teaching enshrined in Catholic tradition. For after close study of the question we are fully convinced that the primitive form of Catholic belief in Purgatory is evidenced in the belief in the fire of judgment. This belief is expressed principally by St. Maximus, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Basil, St. Justin and Origen among the Greeks, and, among the Latins, by St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, St. Paulinus of Nola, and probably St. Jerome. Now the writers who speak of the fire of the judgment attribute to it all the marks of a cleansing fire, and this belief in its existence and its action would be indirect testimony in favour of the dogma of Purgatory, even though the fire were allowed to be but the instrument for the carrying out of the last judgment. But there is more than this in the Fathers' teaching. Those among them who uphold the existence of the judgment fire nearly all fall into the then common error relative to the actual bestowal of reward and retribution. In the first five centuries it was commonly believed, as the Easterns still believe, that the just did not go into Heaven or the wicked into Hell until after the last judgment. Such being the case, the doctrine of a cleansing fire previous to the admission of souls into paradise must, of necessity, have been in line with this common error of perspective, and in the mind of the Greeks, the action of the fire could not have been thought of as effective until the actual moment of the

judgment. Hence the primitive doctrine of the fire of judgment, based upon St. Paul's declaration, would be the original form in which belief in Purgatory showed itself. On this point readers may consult the article *Feu du Jugement* in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique.*

The purifying sufferings of the next world are explicitly mentioned by Tertullian, St. Cyprian and St. Augustine. Tertullian speaks of the offerings made for the dead on their anniversary days, an ancient custom, rooted in old tradition and kept alive by faith. All the Fathers, moreover, speak of prayers and oblations for the dead, and of the offering for them of the sacrifice of the Mass, which were clearly traditional practices as old as the Church herself. Though there be a diversity of opinion as to the nature of the sufferings borne by the souls in Purgatory, the unanimous witness of the Fathers to these practices is proof of the Church's belief in some future expiation beyond the grave that the prayers of the living could do something to shorten.

There is no need to quote a lot of testimonies on this matter; let us, however, listen to the great St. John Chrysostom exhorting his flock to pray for sinners who have passed from life. "As far as lies within our power," he says, "we must help them; not by tears, but by prayers and supplications, by alms and intercessions. It is not without good reason that these practices have been established, nor is it in vain that, in the sacred mysteries, we make a memorial of them that are no more" (Hom. 42 on I Cor. no. 4). We quote St. John Chrysostom by preference because he has been accused, on the strength of passages similar to the one we have just read, of teaching the efficacy of prayers for the damned. As if all sinners, even those dying without showing any outward signs of repentance, must necessarily be looked upon as damned! We must beware of such forced interpretations, no matter how influential the quarter

whence they come. Catholic tradition as to Purgatory is well summed up in the *Memento* of the dead found in many liturgies; "Remember, Lord, thy servants and thy handmaids. To them and to all who sleep in Christ we beseech thee in Jesus Christ our Lord to grant, in thy mercy, a place of refreshment, light and peace."

III. Some Points of Theological Teaching

The Catholic theologian, obedient to the decree of the Council of Trent, must avoid all speculations arising from the spirit of mere curiosity and confine himself to those theological truths that are calculated to further the piety and devotion of the faithful. We shall, therefore, treat only a few of the more interesting points of the theology of Purgatory relating to the sufferings and joys of the holy souls awaiting the call to the beatific vision.

(1) *The sufferings of Purgatory*

As to the nature of these sufferings nothing, as we have said, is certain; we have but vague and general indications as to their intensity, while with regard to their duration the theologian is reduced to conjectures. This uncertainty notwithstanding, these three aspects of the sufferings of Purgatory offer certain points that may be studied with interest and profit.

(a) Must the sufferings of Purgatory be thought of as twofold after the fashion of the pain of loss and the pain of sense in Hell? Many theologians do set up such an analogy, and in popular preaching Purgatory is often represented as a sort of Hell from which, however, the hope and certainty of salvation are not excluded. The analogy, however, is but a very faint one. The very fact that the souls in Purgatory have the hope and certainty of salvation takes away from their temporary deprivation of the vision of God the essential character of a true

damnation. If it be certain also that the holy souls suffer any positive torment, it is equally certain that we have no precise knowledge of its nature. The doctrine of a real fire of Purgatory is regarded by the Church simply as an opinion which, though not to be derided, may yet be refused acceptance without injury to the faith.

It will be more profitable to note how the punishment of Purgatory differs, in its very nature, from that of Hell. The latter is purely and solely penal, the former is essentially an expiation and a purification. It would be wrong to look upon the temporal suffering of Purgatory as merely suffering beneath which the soul remains passive awaiting the hour of its entrance into Heaven. No doubt the soul has to suffer, but it is a saving suffering of expiation which excites in the soul, still in need of purification, sentiments of humility, ardent desires and acts of love which make it less and less unworthy of God. Bossuet in his *Sermon sur la nécessité des souffrances* (3rd point), with that clarity of expression characteristic of his theology, thus expounds the contrast between Purgatory and Hell: "The distinguishing mark of Hell is not simply suffering, but suffering unaccompanied by repentance. The sacred Scriptures reveal to us two sorts of fire; there is a cleansing fire and a consuming and devouring fire; *Uniuscujusque opus probabit ignis* (I Cor. iii, 13) . . . *Cum igne devorante* (Is. xxxiii, 14). This latter is called in the Gospel 'a fire that is not extinguished,' *ignis non exstinguitur* (Mk. ix, 47), to distinguish it from the fire that is kindled to purify us and is always quenched as soon as this office is performed. Suffering accompanied by repentance is a cleansing fire, but suffering without repentance is a devouring and consuming fire, and such precisely is the fire of Hell." Mgr. d'Hulst, again, in his *Lettres de Direction* (cvii), expounding the teaching of St. Catherine of Genoa, lays it down that the

purifying sufferings of Purgatory are made up of humiliations, charity and desire. The flames of Purgatory are, above all, "the fire of a jealous love. Love revenges itself as love knows how; love's vengeance destroys, not the unfaithful object of love, but rather the unfaithfulness itself and thus while punishing the loved one cleanses him and renders him worthy of love."

(b) St. Augustine writes that "the pain of fire will be more grievous to him who shall be saved by fire than anything that man can suffer in this life" (In psalm xxxvii, P.L. xxxvi, 397.) St. Thomas in the *Supplement* qu. 2, a. 1, re-echoes this teaching. "The least pain of Purgatory is greater than the greatest sufferings of this life. For the more ardently one desires a thing, the greater is the suffering caused by the lack of it. And since the regretful desire with which the holy souls hunger after the supreme Good is most ardent . . . it follows that the suffering arising from this delay (in attaining it) is most intense. Similarly . . . since the whole sensitiveness of the body is rooted in the soul, it follows that a more poignant affliction results from any suffering that directly affects the soul." St. Bonaventure essays to temper what appears the too vigorous severity of this teaching. After agreeing that "according to the indisputable assertion of the Master of the Sentences (Peter Lombard) and the holy Doctors, even though the reason may not be evident, the sufferings of Purgatory are more severe than any temporal pain endured by the soul during its union with the body," the seraphic Doctor nevertheless grants that the sufferings cannot rightly be compared unless we take account of the sins for which they are inflicted. We must compare things that fall under the same genus, that is, penalties inflicted for the same sins. For the same sin, then, the slightest suffering in Purgatory will be greater than the most severe punishment inflicted for it on earth. To many

this opinion seems more probable, as being more in accordance with equity, than the opinion held by St. Thomas and St. Augustine. If we ask why the sufferings of Purgatory should be more severe than the corresponding punishments of this world, the reason is to be found in the fact that they are less meritorious. The next life is the time of judgment, of reward and of retribution, this life is the time of mercy and forgiveness; so, suffering freely and willingly borne in this life has a much higher expiatory value than that endured of necessity in Purgatory. This thought should prove profitable and fruitful in leading the faithful to do penance now so as not to have too heavy an account against them hereafter.

(c) With the end of the world there will be an end also of Purgatory. But if we ask how long each soul's stay in Purgatory will last, and whether all the elect or the greater number of them will have to pass through Purgatory, we can find no sure answer. Nevertheless we think it not extravagant to admit, not merely the possibility but the actual fact, that a saintly soul may go at once to Heaven without any delay in Purgatory. Otherwise the explicit definitions of the second general council of Lyons, in the profession of faith imposed upon the Emperor Michael, by Pope Benedict XII in the constitution *Benedictus Deus*, and by the Council of Florence in the decree of union, would seem to be purposeless. In these documents mention is made of "those who die without having incurred, since their baptism, the stain of any sin," and of those who, having stained their souls, "have been cleansed from the stain while their souls were still united with their bodies." And it is declared that these faithful souls enter immediately, at once, *mox*, into Heaven and into the enjoyment of happiness. In these passages there is surely something more than the bare assertion of a possibility; they tell us of a thing that really happens. It cannot, however, happen often. We know

that our sins can be and often are forgiven, both sacramentally and extra-sacramentally, without the whole debt of punishment being remitted. This appears clearly from the dogmatic decree of the Council of Trent (Sess. XIV, ch. XIII): "The holy synod declares to be false and contrary to the teaching of the word of God, the doctrine held by those who maintain that a sin is never forgiven without, at the same time, the punishment incurred by it being also remitted." Undoubtedly, the full forgiveness of a sin both as to guilt and punishment is quite possible, but, in this world, being given the imperfection and weakness of human nature, we can never know whether our acts of the love of God have been so perfect as to win for us the remission of the whole debt of punishment. It is to be feared that, in spite of our efforts, some attachment to sin, or some negligence in the reparation we make to God, may follow us beyond the grave and make us still subject to divine justice. The greatest saints, such as St. Theresa, feared they might go to Purgatory, and the saintly Curé of Ars, preaching on the subject, cried out; "Ah, my friends, how little is needed to send us into the fire of Purgatory!" Conscious of their own unworthiness before God's holiness and convinced of the necessity of expiating their slightest faults, the saints meditated on Purgatory. Let us, who are without their sanctity, imitate them.

It is quite useless to ask how long a time the souls of the dead must pass in Purgatory. In the first place how are we to measure a duration which lies outside of time? Some opinions put forward on this question are certainly rash. The Church allows us to continue indefinitely to offer Mass for the dead, with the one exception of canonized saints. Let us imitate her wisdom and avoid the presumption and folly of counting upon a shortened Purgatory for ourselves if we have not so lived as to deserve it. One thing we know, namely, that the deten-

tion of souls in Purgatory is shortened by the prayers offered for them by the living. And we may well suppose that their sufferings will progressively diminish in intensity, according as the supplications of the living ascend before God's throne. St. Catherine of Genoa speaks of the contentment of the souls in Purgatory, "which grows day by day as God penetrates them, and this He does according to the measure in which obstacles in the way are removed."

(2) *The Joys of Purgatory*

We have just spoken of the contentment of the souls in Purgatory, and for good reason, since, together with their unspeakable sufferings, they experience an indescribable joy.

They rejoice in the certainty of salvation, and as the prayer of the Mass expresses it, sleep the sleep of peace. Their time of waiting is not shadowed by any uncertainty or any fear. Pope Leo X condemned Luther's assertion that "the souls in Purgatory are not all sure of their salvation."

Another of their joys arises from their impeccability, for, with that unchangeableness that characterizes the soul's action in the next life, they now cleave to their true last end, God. He is the only object of their desires and their aspirations. Their attachment to Him is so strong that they detest whatever could separate them from Him, and cling to everything that can increase their knowledge and love of Him. And, therefore, they welcome and love their sufferings because they know that through them they are purified and brought nearer to God. For this reason Leo X also condemned Luther's teaching that, "the souls in Purgatory sin always because they seek repose and hate their sufferings."

The joys of Purgatory have their source in the love of God that burns in the holy souls. As soon as they enter

Purgatory they are set on fire by so great a love that, in St. Thomas's opinion, every venial sin is instantly washed away. "I do not believe," says St. Catherine, "that except for joy of the blessed in Heaven, it is possible to find joy equal to that of the souls in Purgatory . . . The love of God gives to the soul a contentment beyond expression. Yet it does not take away an iota from its suffering, for it is the delay undergone by love before attaining the object loved that causes the suffering, and the suffering is in proportion to the love of God of which God makes the soul capable. Hence in Purgatory the height of joy is mated with the depths of sadness without either being thereby weakened."

In conclusion we may point out the weak spots in the argument against Purgatory, founded on the immutability of the will in the next life, used by Mark of Ephesus and Bessarion. It has already been shown that aeviternity implies not absolute immutability, but substantial immutability accompanied by accidental change. The soul in Purgatory is already substantially fixed in the love of God, but has not yet acquired the eternal unchangeableness that arises from the possession of the beatific vision. So far it is only upon the threshold of this. But a moment will come in its existence when its intellect and will, instead of cleaving unchangeably to God by faith, will be immutably united with Him by direct vision, and the aeviternity in which it has hitherto lived will give place to participated eternity.

CHAPTER VII

HEAVEN

I. *How is the happiness of Heaven to be conceived?* (1) *Sacred Scripture;* (2) *Teaching of the Church;* (3) *Theology.* II. *The essential glory of the elect*: (1) *The vision of the divine nature;* (2) *The vision of creatures in God;* (3) *Inequalities in the essential glory*: (a) *Dogma,* (b) *Explanations,* (c) *What natural human reason can know.* III. *The accidental glory of the blessed*:(1) *Special to some;* (2) *Common to all*: (a) *Accidental glory and the intelligence,* (b) *The will,* (c) *The company of the elect,* (d) *The risen body.* IV. *Consummation and increase of glory*: (1) *No increase in essential glory;* (2) *Possible increase in the disembodied soul;* (3) *The risen body and accidental glory;* (4) *Increase of accidental glory no formal addition to essential glory;* (5) *Conclusion.*

To see God face to face for all eternity; this is Heaven, happiness, glory. This is the ineffable mystery which, during this mortal life, the eye of man cannot see, which his ear cannot hear, which it cannot enter into his heart to conceive. But the certainty of this happiness to be enjoyed by the elect is provided by the sacred Scriptures and guaranteed by the authoritative teaching of the Church, and our feeble human reason, enlightened by faith, can form some faint idea of the happiness of Heaven consisting in a twofold glory, namely, the essential glory which can never be increased, and the accidental, which is capable of a certain growth until the moment of its consummation. The glory of the

elect is in proportion to their merits, and as it shines forth from all the multitude of the blessed it clothes the mystical body of Christ in Heaven with that harmonious variety of which the psalmist sings (xliv, 10): *Sponsa Regis . . . circumdata varietate.*

I. How is the Happiness of Heaven to be Conceived?

(1) *Sacred Scripture*

In many places in the Scriptures, eternal life is represented as the reward and the happiness for which we must strive. This happiness is God's own infinite and beatifying glory, made manifest in the elect who are lifted up to see the glory given by the Father to the Son. Such is the teaching of St. John, xvii, 22, 24; of St. Peter, I Pet. v, 4; of St. Paul, Rom. v, 2; viii, 18; II Cor. iv, 17; Col. iii, 4.

(a) *St Paul.* The Apostle offers a most noteworthy explanation of this teaching, with regard to the means by which we shall realize the possession of God, and participation in his glory, which is the essence of our future happiness. "Charity never falleth away," he writes I Cor. xiii, 8-12, "whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part and prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is part shall be done away. . . We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known." The meaning of these words is clear. St. Paul exalts charity above every other gift of the Holy Ghost, with special emphasis upon its eternal duration, whereas his other gifts will endure only for as long as they are necessary for the building up and bringing to perfection of Christ's mystical body. Here below we are guided by

faith, not by sight. Knowledge and prophecy are attached to faith as its complements; knowledge fits man to preach the gospel, giving him a grasp of its mysteries and the power of expounding them skilfully to others; while by prophecy man, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, attains to a higher understanding of faith's mysteries and reveals hidden things to others, and especially to the faithful to edify, persuade and console them. The whole of this knowledge is yet imperfect; it will disappear and give place to perfect knowledge when the perfect state is attained. The Apostle brings home to us by the use of contrasted images the difference between perfect and imperfect knowledge. The present, imperfect, state is the age of childhood; the future life is the age of manhood; seeing "through a glass, darkly" is, of course, a reference to the indirect and indistinct knowledge of divine things that we have in this life. With this St. Paul contrasts the knowledge which, in the next life, will enable us to see God "face to face," a Jewish expression meaning the direct or intuitive sight of someone, this meaning, in the present instance being confirmed by the contrast, already noted, between our knowledge in this life and that to be had in the next. And when we take also into account what he says elsewhere about this knowledge of God, to wit, that it cannot be put into human speech (II Cor. xii, 2-4), that it surpasses all that the eye can see, the ear hear, or the heart conceive (I Cor. ii, 9), and that it will enable man to know as he is himself known (I Cor. xiii, 12), there can be no doubt that he means that, in Heaven, we shall gaze directly upon God's essence and being. We meet the same teaching again in II Cor. v, 6-8; "while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith and not by sight. But we are confident and have a good will to be absent rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord." St. Paul's thought in this

passage is concerned directly with Jesus Christ, whose glory we, who are still clothed in mortal flesh, cannot see, this privilege belonging to those alone who, in the other world, dwell in the Lord's abode. Nevertheless, to see Christ's glory implies the direct sight of God, for to enjoy the sight of Christ's glory means that we shall see the things that he sees, that is that we shall look directly as he does, upon God's essence.

(b) St. John's teaching on the beatific vision is set forth in a condensed form in his first epistle, iii, 1-2. He recalls, first of all, "what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God." This sonship of God, of which the Scriptures often speak, is not to be thought of as possible except in the fellowship of Jesus, that is to say, by sharing in his sonship and in his right to the divine inheritance. In what this heritage consists to which the adoptive sonship of God entitles us, St. John goes on to explain "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is." It is then in seeing God as he is that our divine sonship will be manifested and our sharing in the divine nature which is begun here below by grace. True, it is Jesus Christ that St. John says we shall see, but this only strengthens our argument in favour of the intuitive sight of God, for the opposition established by the Apostle between our knowledge of the God-man in this life and in the next indicates clearly that the excellence of the next life will consist in a condition of glory analogous to that of the glorified Christ; we shall be like to him. And being like Jesus we shall see the inner reality of his divinity. Is it not St. John who records (xvii, 3) our Lord's own words that eternal life is to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent? And Christ's promise that he and

his Father will love them who love him and that he will manifest himself to them (xiv, 21), for he "who sees the Son sees also the Father" (xiv, 6-9).

(2) *The Church's Teaching*

The Church uses her authority to enforce this teaching. Pope Benedict XII, speaking *ex cathedra* in the constitution *Benedictus Deus* sums up the teaching of Scripture and Tradition touching the happiness of the blessed, as follows: "they see God's essence directly and face to face, and thus the souls of the departed enjoy the divine nature, and are thereby rendered truly happy in the possession of eternal life and peace." The Council of Florence, in its decree of union, gives a somewhat greater precision to this doctrine in its declaration that "the elect will see God himself clearly, as he is in his unity and trinity."

(3) *Catholic Theology*

The theologian's task is to explain how it is that the immediate sight of God makes the soul supremely happy.

To see God is beyond the human soul's natural powers. But by God's gift of the light of glory man can be raised to heights impossible to unaided nature. The light of glory brings to his intellect an increase of energy and power enabling him to enter into intuitive union with the uncreated Light, God. We need not go into the detailed theological explanation of how this is possible and of the parts played by the divine essence and the light of glory. It will be enough to set down the common teaching of the Church. By the intuitive vision of God the soul is united with him in the closest possible union in the cognitive order. But God's proper and essential life and action lie in knowing himself and, as a consequence, divinely loving and delighting in himself. Hence the human soul, without losing its own

individuality or being absorbed in God is yet united with him in knowing and loving him, in an activity, that is to say, that is a participation of God's own life. But God's self knowledge and love are his infinite beatitude because they are the fullness of his Being expressing and realizing itself in the ineffable Trinity of divine Persons. What words then can express the happiness of the beatified, deified soul that shares in God's own life! "To see God as he is, is to take hold of God himself; to have a full knowledge of God is to possess God himself. Then between God and us there will be the same near, close and intimate union as there is between the luminous and certain idea and the mind that conceives it. But as this union takes place in the mind, the most inward part of the soul, the whole soul is penetrated by the Godhead. This nuptial union of the soul with uncreated Light fills it to overflowing with perfection, ravishes it with love, inebriates it with joy, makes it like to God himself. The soul keeps its own nature as does iron plunged in fire, but just as the iron takes on the properties of the fire in which it glows, so is the soul enraged with divine splendour and love and beatitude. Beatitude, then, is above all, to know, to see, to live in the ecstasy of knowledge and illumination; *Haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te solum Deum verum*" (Janvier, O.P., Carême 1903, pp. 122-123).

II. The Essential Glory of the Blessed

The intuitive vision of God is called the glory of the blessed because the glory of God (whom the beatified soul sees in Himself and loves for Himself) is shed forth upon them making manifest their dignity, holiness and merits. It is called their essential glory to distinguish it from the accidental glory that envelops the saints apart from the beatific vision.

(1) *The intuitive vision of God the chief element in the essential glory of the blessed*

The principal object of the intuitive vision is God himself. The glory of the blessed in heaven consists then primarily, and before all, in the vision of God. The greater their knowledge and love of God, the greater will be their happiness in the brighter effulgence of the divine glory. Now, on the one hand, it is certain that the blessed, seeing the divine nature as it is in itself, cannot but see its attributes and its subsistent relations (or Persons), which are really identified with God's essence. The elect will not contemplate God by halves or piecemeal; they will see him as a whole with all his essential attributes and in his adorable Trinity of Persons. Hence the precise wording of the decree of Florence quoted above. But on the other hand, God, as an object of knowledge, is infinite and only his own divine mind can know himself perfectly. No creature, however perfect, not even the human mind of Christ himself, can have as clear and penetrating a knowledge of God as he has of himself. There is here an apparent contradiction. The solution commonly given by theologians is that God is seen by the blessed *totus* but not *totaliter*. He is seen *totus*, that is, the whole of God is seen because he is infinitely simple, without parts of any kind, and if he is seen as he is, the whole Godhead must be seen. But if we look at the person who sees God and the faculty with which he sees him we must say that God is not seen *totaliter*, that the human mind does not pierce through to the ultimate depths of God's infinite being. For the human mind, even raised to its utmost height by the light of glory, is still a created and a finite thing, while God is infinite intelligibility, and the essential disproportion between the two cannot be bridged. Hence "God is said to be incomprehensible, not because there is anything in

him that is not seen, but because he is not seen as perfectly as he, in himself, is visible" (St. Thomas, *Sum. Theol.* I. qu. xii, art. 7, ad. 2). When, therefore, we say that God is seen whole but not wholly, we mean that the object of the beatific vision is the infinite being of God, but that the mode and the act of seeing him are finite, as proceeding from a finite creature. In somewhat the same way, to use St. Thomas's apt illustration, a man may know that a proposition can be proved and yet be unable to prove it; he knows all that the proposition contains, but his way of knowing it is not adequate to the proper handling of it. So the blessed in Heaven will see the Infinite, God; they will see that he is infinite but will not have an infinite knowledge of him, in something the same way as an object seen in the distance is seen whole, but not seen as clearly as when it comes near.

(2) *Creatures seen in God are a subordinate element in the essential glory of the blessed*

A subordinate element in the essential glory of the blessed is their knowledge of creatures, seen in God. For God's essence is the mirror in which he shows the blessed certain truths concerning creatures. God himself sees all creatures in himself. Since he is the transcendent cause of all things he contains in himself the representation of all things distinct from himself, even of those that are merely possible, according to their ultimate generic, specific, differential and individual elements. In Heaven, therefore, the order of our knowing will be a happy reversal of what it is on earth. Here, we rise from creatures to the Creator, his visible works leading us to some knowledge of his invisible perfections. But "when we leave the land of exile and become citizens of Heaven we shall have no more need of this ladder . . . He who dwells in Heaven is within reach and within sight of that by whose means he can look upon the things of God.

He sees the Word and in the Word he sees what was made by the Word. He is no longer under the necessity of begging the works to give him some knowledge of the workman. Nay, more: in order to know the works he does not have to come down to their level, for he sees them in a light incomparably more brilliant than that radiated by them" (St. Bernard). Hence it cannot be doubted that the blessed will see, in the Godhead, all those things that concern them, all that they may rightfully wish to know. And this is also the teaching of a council held in Paris in 1528, which declares that "there is open to all the blessed the divine mirror showing them everything that concerns them" (Mansi, xxxii, 1174).

Being called to the life of grace, the blessed will, of course, know the mysteries of faith, which in this life they have believed, for sight cannot be inferior to faith. Hence in seeing God they will see whatever concerns the Church as a supernatural society, the nature and efficacy of the Sacraments, the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and the wonderful ways of Providence in the ordering of their own salvation and that of those dear to them. Inasmuch as they form part of the created world they will have such a knowledge of the wonders of creation as will help to increase their love of and gratitude to the Creator. Though we cannot say how far this knowledge will extend, we may agree with St. Thomas that it will satisfy every natural desire of the soul (*Sum. Theol.* I. qu. xii, art. 8, ad. 4). As individuals the blessed will know, either in the intuitive vision of God, or through special revelation, whatever concerns themselves, or their affections or their labours. This should bring consolation to those who weep for the loss of their dear ones. "Dying in the peace of the Lord," writes Père Terrien, "they leave us for a time; but thanks to their eternal ecstasy in the ever present sight of God, we are not absent from their thoughts, since according

to the measure of our needs, and the full satisfaction of their desires, they see us in the infinitely brilliant mirror of the divine light" (*La Grace et la Gloire*, bk. IX, ch. IV, pp. 178-179). St. Thomas, relying upon the principle that nothing is hidden from the blessed that is of personal concern to them, teaches that the saints have an immediate knowledge of our prayers to them and of the honour we pay to them. And theologians likewise deduce from the same principle that they have a special knowledge of those works in which they were interested when on earth.

(3) *Inequalities in the essential glory of the blessed*

(a) *The Dogma.* "The blessed, declares the council of Florence, will see God, and according to the diversity of their merits, some more perfectly than others." This is a truth clearly propounded in the sacred Scriptures. Jesus Christ tells us that in his Father's house there are many mansions (St. John, xiv, 2) and St. Paul says that the elect will differ from one another as star differs from star (I Cor. xv, 41). It is also expressly taught whenever it is said that, at the last day, God will repay each man according to his good works (St. Matt. xvi, 27; I Cor. iii, 8; II Cor. ix, 6). The glory of Heaven is, indeed, to be thought of as a wage (St. Matt. v, 12; x, 42; xix, 17; xx, 8; II Tim. iv, 8; II John., 8; Apoc. xxii, 12). The same teaching is implied in many of the parables. Yet, many heretics, and notably some Protestants, quote the parable of the workmen called at different hours to work in the vineyard, as proving that all the blessed will receive the same reward (Matt. xx, 1-16). We need not go into a detailed exposition of the parable; it will be enough to explain the allegorical meaning of the penny, paid as wages to all the workmen alike. The penny that all receive, even those called at the eleventh hour, represents objective happiness which is the same

for all, and not subjective and relative happiness in which alone inequalities are to be found. Besides, in a parable it is not necessary to find a special application for every detail; it is enough if the general teaching is clear. Now in this parable Christ does not intend to teach that the reward is proportioned to each man's merits, but rather to show that the glory of Heaven is not measured by the length of time that a man has laboured, but by his faithful response to his calling and the zeal he has displayed in his work. The workman's murmurs and the employer's answer that it is his good pleasure to pay all alike do not contradict this general interpretation of the penny; the murmurings serve simply to lead up to the master's answer. They do not indicate any discontent or envy on the part of the blessed; and lastly, it must be remembered that the lesson and the threat that ends it are addressed directly to the Jews, to those who had been called at the first hour.

(b) *Theological explanation.* If different degrees of glory are the reward of varying degrees of merit, it is clear that glory corresponds with the ardour of love that inflames the beatified soul, and that the light of glory, which is the immediate principle of the beatific vision, is measured by the exigencies of this charity. "If the children of the heavenly Father are not all equal in beatitude," says Père Terrien, "there must be differences of degree in the vision they have of his infinite beauty. But since one and the same divine nature is united to their minds as the activating principle of the beatific vision, since one and the same indivisible truth is the object of their direct perception, whence can these differences arise? Assuredly, not from the human intelligence itself. The Queen of Heaven, if we consider her natural faculties, however highly our love may exalt her, cannot be compared with the angelic spirits. Yet who would dare to say or think that any angel, even the highest of the

Seraphim, can look upon God with a gaze so steadfast, so piercing, so wide-embracing as that of the glorious Mother of our Saviour? Genius is neither a title to eternal reward nor the measure according to which it is given. The blessed see God in varying degree because they share unequally in the infinite perfection of the divine intelligence, or in other words, because the light of glory, the immediate principle of the beatific vision, is not given to all in the same degree. But, adds St. Thomas, the measure of this light is not any natural endowment, but charity: "for the greater the charity, the more ardent is the desire, and it is from the ardour of desire that arises the capacity of receiving what is desired" (I, qu. XII, art. 4).

(c) *Utility and result of study during life.* It may be asked whether the study of the sacred sciences during life will be of any profit in the next world. There can be no doubt that the beatific vision will bring an understanding of the mysteries of faith to all the blessed without exception. But at the same time it is evident that those who, during life, have the more closely studied these mysteries will be rewarded in the next by a more perfect perception of the truths on which they have lovingly meditated. As theologians put it, the divine essence is a mirror reflecting at God's good pleasure and showing to the created mind that looks upon it whatever truths he wishes it to reflect. God produces these differences in the knowledge of the blessed according to the exigences of the light of glory proper to each, that is to say, as we have explained, according to each one's charity in the first place, but also and consequently, according to the various ways in which the blessed have manifested their charity and laid up merit in heaven. Theologians will be rewarded as theologians; which is not to say that their reward will be greater than that of others whose sanctity is equal to their. Diversity is not necessarily

inequality. And so we come back to the teaching propounded above; in God the saints will find the full satisfaction of all their desires.

III. The Accidental Glory of the Blessed

In order to distinguish the essential glory of the blessed from their accidental glory we must consider the medium of cognition rather than the object. Suarez, who takes this view, in which he differs from many of his predecessors, well defines the accidental glory of the blessed, as every perfection belonging to them apart from the primary and essential of beatitude which is God clearly seen in the beatific vision.

(1) *Accidental glory special to some of the blessed*

Under this heading comes the *aureola* of virgins, martyrs and doctors. Although this question does not concern the faith, directly or indirectly, we may well look upon this special glory, called the aureola, as a reward accorded, in addition to the beatific vision, to those saints who, by the exercise of heroic virtue, have earned a special recompense. Just as all the fights that man is called upon to wage in this life may be reduced to three classes, so likewise may all the heroic victories that he wins. He must fight against himself, that is against the flesh, against the world and against the devil.

By the practice of perpetual virginity he gains a complete victory over the flesh; his victory over the world is complete when, in testimony of his faith, he gives his life for God, since death is the greatest evil the world can inflict upon him; while he completely overthrows the devil when, by the written and the spoken word, he forces Satan, the prince of darkness, to fly before the shining light of truth. That this classification

is somewhat conventional we do not dispute, but the idea of the special aureola of virgins, martyrs and doctors is so well established in the Church that we could not well overlook it.

It may also be supposed that the sacramental character, indelibly impressed upon the soul, will enhance its accidental glory, in so far as it will bear eternal witness to its fidelity.

(2) *Accidental glory common to all*

In dealing with this point we have no other guide than theological opinion. It seems altogether probable that the accidental glory of the blessed increases the perfection and the happiness of both soul and body and that the loving society of the elect will crown and complete both.

(a) *Accidental glory and the intelligence.* We have already suggested that, in order to satisfy the legitimate curiosity of the blessed, infused knowledge and special revelations may supply what is lacking in the intuitive vision. For since the beatific vision does not imply omniscience, and since it is in proportion, both as to depth and breadth, to each one's grace and merits, we may suppose that, where the case requires it, God would give some new revelation to make up for the deficiency of knowledge arising from the beatific vision itself. This new revelation would form part of the recipient's accidental glory. So thinks Suarez. It would even seem that a certain number of things, events or actions can be known by the saints only by a cognitive process distinct from the intuitive vision, and belonging, therefore, to their accidental glory. For the intuitive vision brings with it a knowledge of its object, whether primary or secondary, that is always actual, and that, in consequence, is eternal and immutable. But it is hardly probable that such things as prayers, vows, feasts, wor-

ship and so forth should be known to the saints whom they concern in the same way as the Godhead itself. Compared with the saints' essential glory these things are of small importance, especially when they are past. Moreover it does not seem fitting that their attention should always be fixed upon the homage and honours received by them. Likewise, among the things known otherwise than in the immediate vision of God must be included the prosperity of works in which they were interested on earth, as founders, and similar material preoccupations.

Apart from the knowledge thus freshly gained by special revelation, the separated soul will retain the knowledge acquired on earth; the memory of events and persons, of their loves and their struggles, will abide with the souls of the blessed, and if they have been the means of increased merit, will bring them an accession of glory.

Finally it seems necessary that those minds that on earth were unable to grow to full natural perfection shall be endowed by God, from their entry into beatitude with what is wanting to them. Were it not so, where would be the happiness of infants who die before coming to the age of reason, and of those adults who intellectually must be counted as infants?

(b) *Accidental glory and the will.* In the accidental glory of the blessed, just as in the essential, the perfections of the will accompany those of the mind. It will be enough, then, to mention in a general way, that knowledge will be completed by love and delight. St. Augustine well sums up this matter in five words; *Omnes beati habent quod volunt.* In Heaven there will be no struggle within the will, no sorrow will be possible; the will will delight in the possession of all it desires. Before the resurrection its separation from the body will cause it no pain. Having all it can desire it is satisfied, even though it does not enjoy the possession of all that it would be

possible to have; the resurrection will enable the body to share its happiness, but it does not suffer from the delay because it has all that is possible in its present state. Besides, to speak of delay in such a connection is inaccurate. The soul's glory is eternal, and hence wholly in actuation. Time no longer exists for it, and to think of it as waiting for the resurrection is to be deceived by the imagination.

The blessed will not suffer from seeing others higher in glory than themselves; the absence of dear ones condemned to Hell for their sins will cause them no grief. In the beatific vision they see the supreme Truth and Goodness, and hence everything else that is known to them, either by infused knowledge or special revelation, will necessarily fit in with the requirements of divine Truth and Goodness. The elect will apprehend, judge and appreciate all things from the point of view of God's justice, mercy, goodness and other perfections. There will, therefore, be no room for jealousy or sadness, because there are many mansions in the Father's house, no room for sorrow or regret because some have been deaf to God's call and will have to suffer and expiate their fall. "Nothing will trouble this sweet and peaceful companionship, neither regret for those for ever absent nor loving compassion, for they have proved themselves unworthy of this by wilfully outraging and denying God, to whose wisdom and justice our minds and wills lovingly submit themselves" (P. Monsabré, 100th conférence).

(c) *Accidental glory and the companionship of the blessed.* On the other hand what joy it will be to the blessed to meet and recognize each other, not only in the intuitive vision of God, but also by direct mutual intercourse! To deny that they can communicate directly with one another would be to deny them the legitimate exercise of their faculties and to contradict

the very concept of glory, which is the possession of every perfection and the satisfaction of every wish. The blessed will love each other "as a consequence of the virtue of infused charity which will be theirs in its highest perfection, and of the most tender and ardent love which will be constantly nourished and increased by an ever growing knowledge of their natural and supernatural perfections, far excelling anything to be found on earth and unmixed with any displeasing element of positive imperfection" (De Smet, *Notre vie surnaturelle*, Vol. II, p. 303).

(d) *Accidental glory and the risen body.* After the resurrection the glory of the soul will irradiate the body; of this something will be said in the next chapter. Here let it merely be observed that by the reunion of soul and body the organic faculties, which exist only in a virtual state in the disembodied soul, will be reconstituted. Will the exercise of these faculties form a new element in the soul's accidental glory? On this point Père de Smet, summing up the teaching of St. Thomas and Lessius, shows that while the delights proper to the more material senses of taste, smell and touch would have to undergo some process of spiritualization in order to contribute to the accidental glory of the blessed, there is not the same difficulty as regards sight and hearing. After the resurrection the ears of the saints will be ravished by music that will be not only spiritual but vocal also, while their eyes will glory in the sight of the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

IV. Consummated Glory and Increase of Glory

Consummated glory or beatitude consists in the full development of glory in completely restored human nature, and cannot therefore exist until after the resurrection.

Some of the Fathers and early writers, especially in the first five centuries, holding the opinion that the soul could not be glorified until its re-union with the body, put off the possession of the beatific vision itself until after the resurrection. This erroneous opinion was taught by certain theologians right down to the thirteenth century and defended by Pope John XXII, speaking, not as Pope, but as a simple theologian. Benedict XII, John's successor, solemnly condemned the error in his bull *Benedictus Deus*, wherein he repeats and officially propounds the formula of faith in which John had retracted his errors before his death. Thus it is now a dogma of faith that "the souls of the just, immediately after death or after having expiated those sins that still burdened them, even before the resurrection of their bodies, are admitted into Heaven and the society of the angels; and, since the passion and death of Jesus Christ and his Ascension, they have seen, see and will see, the divine nature by direct vision and face to face." Nevertheless it must be admitted that the consummation of glory adds something to the essential glory resulting from the beatific vision itself, and, therefore, even in this brief consideration of the question of Heaven something needs to be said upon this somewhat delicate subject.

(1) *No increase possible in essential glory*

The intuitive vision of God is, in St. Thomas's words, "one action and eternal." Inasmuch as it is a participation of God's life, which is eternity, its own duration is measured by participated eternity. Hence it is well named "eternal life." From whatever side we look at it, whether we consider it in itself, or examine its originating principle or its object, we can discover nothing that implies succession, nothing involving the possibility of change.

St. Augustine in his treatise on the Trinity (Bk. xv,

ch. xvi), describes admirably "this unchanging happiness, when our minds will no more be dizzied by jumping from one thing to another and then back to what they have just left; one single glance will embrace the whole of our knowledge." But if the act of vision is, as St. Thomas puts it (*Cont. Gentes* III, ch. LXII), "an instant which neither passes nor fades," it remains always self-identical and excludes all progress and all growth in the knowledge of God's perfections, and consequently in glory. It is as well to insist upon this truth because we sometimes meet with descriptions of eternal happiness that owe more to imagination than to sound theology. "If we are to believe some writers," says Père Terrien, "God will reveal himself to the blessed continuously and progressively. Looking upon his adorable face they will for ever be finding therein new perfections, and, growing knowledge bringing greater love, they will for all eternity go on from happiness to greater happiness. These writers bring forward two arguments to prove their assertion, one based on the nature of God, the other on that of created intelligence. God, they say, would not be supreme Goodness if he were not for ever self-communicative . . . and on the other hand, a happiness that remains ever at the same level cannot satisfy the human mind. Life is movement, and therefore a static and unprogressive life cannot be perfect life." But the arguments are by no means conclusive. "In Heaven the state of man is perfect . . . From the first instant that man sees God face to face he exercises to the full the whole capacity and power of vision given to him at God's judgment-seat. In order to see more he would need more grace and an increase in the light of glory, for action cannot surpass the principle whence it springs. He penetrates the ocean of divine light as deeply as the energy of his love can urge him, but as Heaven is the goal and terminus of man's existence, the love that

accompanies his entrance therein can grow no more. But God's prodigal generosity, far from coming to an end, still runs full stream; it is he who keeps in being the splendour of glory, he who is the inexhaustible source of the supreme perfection of knowledge enjoyed by the blessed. Vain is the objection that life without movement is no real life. Let it be granted that there is no life without movement, but, on the other hand, it must be allowed that the movement that constitutes perfect life admits of neither change, nor succession, nor progress, for where these are there is transition from the potential to the actual, and the life subject to them is, necessarily, imperfect. There is one life which is supremely full and supremely perfect, and that is God's life which is God himself. His life is infinitely perfect movement, for it is infinite actuality; infinitely unchangeable movement, for he is the supremely eternal and changeless. The immobility of a corpse is the total negation of life, while to contemplate unchangeably supreme beauty is to possess the fullness of life. To conclude, then, the life of the blessed will be the more perfect accordingly as it is less mobile, less changeful, less progressive," (*La grace et la gloire*, vol. I pp. 188-192). There can, then, be no growth in essential glory; such growth could only come from an increase in the light of glory, but as the soul has reached its goal, it can no longer merit any increase of grace or, consequently, any higher degree of the light of glory.

(2) *Possible increase of accidental glory in the soul while separated from the body*

St. Thomas in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (IV. dist. 12, qu. 1, art. 2., sol. 2) uses the collect of the Mass of Pope Leo: *Annue, nobis, Domine, ut animae famuli tui Leonis haec prosit oblatis* . . . as a text on which to base his explanation of how our prayers, homage and sacrifices

contribute to the glory of the saints. "The saints' reward is glory, and it is twofold. There is firstly the essential joy which they receive from God himself, and secondly, an accidental joy that comes to them from creatures. As to their essential joy it is the more probable opinion (now we should have to say, the commonly received opinion) that it admits of no increase; but their accidental glory may grow at least until the judgment-day. Otherwise the reunion with the body would bring no increase of joy. Also their glory is increased whenever they procure benefits for us on earth, since the angels in Heaven rejoice over every sinner that does penance (Luke xv, 10). The saints rejoice likewise over all things that are done to the honour of God, and especially over all that we do to thank God for their glory."

Theological reasoning proves that such an increase of glory is possible. The formal principle of glory is knowledge. But in the separated soul the intellect can still exercise the activity proper to it, and there are a multitude of objects, apart from God, upon which the intellect can gaze, and many of which, as we have seen, will be made known to it by successive revelations. So as these revelations are made, the soul's accidental glory will increase. And a special increase will accrue to it from the companionship of the saints. Nor does this contradict what has been said about eternity, for participated eternity does not exclude a multiplicity and succession of those natural operations which make up the saints' accidental glory.

(3) *Increase of accidental glory no real addition to essential glory*

All created things which can increase the saints' accidental glory are contained, super-eminently, as theologians say, in God the first cause of all. Their value in the eyes of the saints is measured by their value in God,

and, just as God adds nothing to his own glory and happiness by creating creatures to glorify him, so the essential glory of the blessed receives no real addition from the increase of their accidental glory; nothing is added to their beatifying knowledge and love. "Since beatitude is nothing but the possession of the sovereign Good, everything that may be possessed over and above the vision and the enjoyment of God will not make the soul happier; otherwise God would add to his own happiness in giving existence to creatures" (St. Thomas, *De Malo* qu. v. art. 1, ad. 4). And elsewhere he shows that the saints, while rejoicing in our joys, do not thereby receive any real addition to their own happiness; their joy will not be greater, it will be more widely spread. This is what theologians mean by saying that, relatively to essential glory, the increase of accidental glory is purely material.

(4) *The resurrection will bring an access of accidental glory only*

Though some theologians have thought otherwise in the past, it is now generally agreed that the essential glory of the blessed is not increased after the resurrection of the body. Undoubtedly, before the resurrection, it is the soul's desire that the fullness of glory in which it delights shall, when the time comes, illumine the body also. But this desire does not cause the soul to feel any sense of privation. The soul in the possession of God experiences all the happiness of which it is capable. When the resurrection takes place the soul's glory will glorify the body, but there will be no increase in the brightness of glory, no growth in the soul's essential glory.

(5) *Conclusion*

We reach, therefore, the conclusion that consummated glory is substantially identical with essential glory. Although the accidental glory of the risen body is

a very real thing, it only means a purely material addition to the soul's essential glory, it only means that there is one more object that is now irradiated by the splendour diffused by the beatific vision.

The intuitive vision of God, being measured by eternity, confirms the soul in the fixed and unchangeable choice of its last end that it has freely made. Cleaving indefectibly to the Supreme Good, the Soul cannot possibly fall again into sin, nor can it ever lose the glory it has won. The knowledge of its eternal security crowns its beatitude. Heaven, therefore, filled with the light of the beatific vision, the kingdom of those who can fall no more, nor in any way fail in their loyalty to God, will be in truth the perfect realization of peace, order with tranquillity: *Caelestis Urbs Jerusalem, beata pacis visio.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH AND THE GENERAL JUDGMENT

1. *The general resurrection of all men:* (1) *Resurrection natural yet miraculous;* (2) *How it will come about;* (3) *It endows the body with an inward principle of incorruptibility.* II. *The glorious resurrection of the elect: Qualities of glorified bodies; impassibility, subtlety, agility, clarity.* III. *The general judgment:* (1) *Dogma.* (2) *Theology;* (3) *Inquiry and retribution.*

The resurrection of the flesh is a dogma of faith explicitly set forth in the various creeds of the Church. The sacred Scriptures, especially St. Paul's epistles, speak of it so often that it would be quite superfluous to expound the scriptural argument in proof of it (cfr. St. John v 28; vi, 39, 40, 44, 55; St. Mark xii, 26; Rom. vi, 5; II Cor. v; Phil iii, 11; I Thess. iv, 15; I Tim. ii, 16; Hebr. xi, 35, etc.)

From among the many pronouncements of the Church bearing upon the resurrection it will suffice to quote the dogmatic declaration issued by the fourth council of the Lateran; "He (Christ) will come at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead, and to render to all, whether elect or reprobate, according to their works; and all will rise with their own bodies which they have borne in this life, to be rewarded according to their works, whether good or evil, the bad to go into eternal punishment with the devil, the good to receive everlasting glory with Christ."

Leaving aside certain subsidiary questions relative to the "living and the dead" who are to be judged by Christ, we shall consider (1) the dogma of the general resurrection of all men; (2) that of the glorious resurrection reserved to the elect; (3) that of the general judgment.

(I) The General Resurrection of All

The dogma of the general resurrection may be stated very briefly. At the last day all men will rise again, and will rise with the same bodies as they had in this life. The soul will not be joined to a body taken haphazard, but will be rejoined to the body which had been its companion in this life. It is only right that it should be so, for since the body had its part in most of the actions to be submitted to God's judgment, it ought likewise to share in their reward or punishment.

All this is so simple that we need not delay over it. But there are three points, not so clear, to which we may turn our attention.

Theologians, following St. Thomas, show, in the first place, how the resurrection, though a miracle wrought at God's pleasure, is yet in accordance with nature. Secondly, the human mind seeks to understand how the resurrection takes place, and Thomist philosophy is asked to give a reasonable explanation. Thirdly, according to theologians, the body after the resurrection possesses an inward principle of incorruptibility.

(1) *Since the resurrection is miraculous, how can it be said to be natural?*

When speaking of death we said that the separation of the two elements that go to the making of man does not respond to the exigencies of the formal element, his immortal soul. The state of separation, though not

contrary to the soul's nature, Since this is capable of self-existence, is yet less natural to it than union with the body. So the union of soul and body being natural, their re-union would seem to be natural; the soul, being made for the body, would seem to yearn to be rejoined by its life-companion. It would appear as if St. Thomas tries to prove the resurrection with arguments of this kind (*Cont. Gentes*, iv, 79). But, as has often been shown, such arguments are not meant to be demonstrative but persuasive only. When St. Thomas says that the future resurrection of the body is supported by the evidence of reason (*evidens ratio suffragatur*), he is speaking merely of persuasive evidence. Certainly if we consider the effect of the resurrection, namely, the reconstitution of man in his whole being, it may be called natural. But as the cause of this reconstitution is not natural, man cannot be said to have any claim to it. The only natural efficient cause of man is human generation, and every other way of bringing him into existence is miraculous. So, for example, the union of Christ's body and soul, considered as an effect, was natural, but considered in its cause it was miraculous, since the conception of Christ in his virgin Mother's womb was a miracle. Similarly in the case of Adam and Eve, a natural effect was produced by a non-natural cause, for they were not begotten, but created. So, at the end of the world, nature will be unable to provide any active principle capable of re-uniting soul to body. It may be granted that the soul has a claim upon the body, but only if this be rightly understood. It cannot be admitted that the soul has any positive tendency of any sort towards rebuilding the body. If the body is restored to the soul, the soul will naturally actuate it and revitalize it as its own, but the body must first be given back to it. And the body, reduced to dust, dispersed and lost, perhaps, in the thousands of transfor-

mations undergone by the elements once composing it, can have in itself no natural tendency towards being again actuated and vitalized by the soul. There is necessary, therefore, the intervention of some external cause, more potent than the forces of nature, more potent even than the angels, for it is beyond their power to invest matter with the dispositions needful for human life. In a word, God's intervention is necessary, and although, in speaking of the general resurrection of all men we cannot strictly call his intervention supernatural (for this term implies a relation to eternal life), it must be described as miraculous.

The miraculous character of the resurrection has never been explicitly defined, but it is a theological conclusion to be accepted as true, because of the unanimous agreement of theologians; to deny it would be temerarious.

(2) *How the resurrection is effected*

The dogmatic assertion that "the dead will rise again with the same bodies as they had in this life," is rather apt to stagger the mind; especially when it is pointed out that the question is one of numerical identity. At once a multitude of questions arise that, together or singly, seem to overwhelm our reason. How can such a resurrection be possible, seeing that throughout his life a man's body is ceaselessly changing and its elements subject to continuous transformations? And when we think of what happens to the body after death, the difficulties grow apace. What of those bodies that are eaten by cannibals, or those devoured by animals that afterwards serve as food for men? The difficulty is equally great as regards bodies committed to the earth in burial; they suffer decomposition and their elements are taken up into various forms of vegetable life, of which some are used as food, and so forth. In such an

endless course of changes what becomes of the particles that made up any human body, and how can they possibly be brought together again at the last day?

In such a question as this reason alone must guide us; the imagination cannot but lead us astray. And, indeed, if we seek an answer from any philosophy but that of St. Thomas, we shall, in all probability, seek in vain. According to the Scholastic philosophy two elements only go to make up any individual man, to wit, the soul, called the *form*, and the body called the *matter*. The soul is the principle that gives to the matter its being as a living, sensitive and intelligent substance, and invests it with continuous self-identity, despite the flux and change of its component elements. St. Thomas was fully aware of the difficulties arising from the continual displacement of the atoms or particles of the body, but maintains that, in spite thereof, the form preserves the permanent identity of the whole. With his usual precise brevity he declares that "*secundum materiam partes fluunt et refluunt*," but numerical identity depends upon the form not upon the matter; "*non semper sunt eaedem partes secundum materiam sed solum secundum speciem*" (*De spiritualibus creaturis*, art. 3). Hence material identity of the body's particles, impossible to maintain, is not needed to explain the resurrection. We can fully safeguard the dogma, and expound it indeed clearly, by simply upholding the formal identity of the whole man. And, as we have seen, according to the Thomist philosophy, which looks upon the soul as the substantial form of the human body, formal identity persists despite all the changes and variations affecting the material elements of the body. If the soul is the only form of the whole man, at one and the same time, intellectual, sensitive, vegetative and corporal; if, in other words, it is from the soul that the body draws the whole of its being, as man, as animal, as living, as substance, as thing, then

at the resurrection the soul will give back to the body identically the same endowments as it had bestowed on it from the first. On this hypothesis we need not worry about what happens to the particles of matter when the body decomposes. Whatever material elements God may use and submit to the sovereignty of the soul, this matter will become the same body that the soul possessed in this life, and hence, as Cardinal Billot puts it; "God could cause a dead man to arise, without giving him a single atom of the matter which had belonged to his body before death" (*De Novissimis*, p. 136). What matters it, therefore, if it please God that the infant shall arise as a grown man or the old man as still in the flower of youth! Such speculations as these, in which theologians indulge, are quite secondary, and even altogether without any bearing on the dogma of the resurrection, expounded according to St. Thomas's philosophy.

It may be objected that this explanation tends to destroy the worship we give to relics and the value of the reverence we pay to the bodies of the dead. But the objection will not hold water. Such worship and reverence are purely relative and, in reality, are directed to the persons whom the relics and bodies bring to our remembrance. And though the Church has forbidden cremation, this is not because the resurrection would be thereby hindered. Still the burial of the dead has in it a certain power of symbolism well calculated to sustain faith in the future resurrection.

(3) *The risen body will be endowed with an inward principle of incorruptibility*

To be able not to die is one thing, to be unable to die is another. Adam, in the state of innocence, was immortal in the former sense; the latter kind of immortality is proper to spiritual substances, angels and souls;

but it will also belong to men's bodies after the resurrection. As far as the elect are concerned, this is explicitly stated in the gospel according to St. Luke (xx, 34-36): "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection from the dead shall neither be married nor take wives. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." It must be granted, too, that the risen bodies of the damned also have in them a principle of incorruptibility, for they also rise again for eternity. But their immortality will be their punishment, implying none of those qualities that make for happiness; and since the Scriptures always speak of immortality as a blessing it is only natural that St. Luke should mention the incorruptibility of the blessed alone.

A consequence of the immortality of risen bodies, whether in Heaven, Hell or Limbo, will be the cessation of all nutritive and generative functions. The organs that now perform these functions will remain, for the body will be restored in its integrity, but they will occasion no suffering and no movements of concupiscence or sensuality. The soul will rule the body instead of serving it.

II. The Resurrection unto Glory

The bodies of the blessed in Heaven will be endowed with certain qualities which the damned in Hell will lack, namely impassibility, subtlety, agility and brightness.

Impassibility means that the glorified body will be beyond the reach of all injury and corruption. The inward principle of incorruptibility will be common to them and the lost, but impassibility adds to this the

absence of all pain and affliction. It is to this quality that St. Paul's words are generally applied: "It (the body) is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption" (I Cor. xv, 42).

Subtlety is not, as some theologians have thought, a sort of spiritualization of the body, investing bodies with the power of mutual penetration. It means rather that the body will be wholly under the dominion of the soul, which will, as it were, irradiate it and refine all its pleasures and sensations, so that, though material, it will depend to the slightest possible extent upon the conditions of matter: "It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (ibid. v, 44). Owing to the gift of agility the body will be able unresistingly to obey the soul's commands. "It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power" (ibid.) Through this gift the whole material world will be at the disposition of the blessed, for whom the universe was made. The immense spaces of the world will be under the rule of the saints who will shine in the infinite vaults of heaven as the stars above us. But however great may be the speed at which the glorified bodies of the blessed move through space, it will still be measured by time, real time even though infinitesimally short.

Lastly the glory of the soul, irradiating the body, will invest it with brightness, making it shine as did Christ's body on the mount of Transfiguration. "It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory" (ibid.). But after all, what can we say of the future state of glory, we who, as long as we are here, are still subject to the whims of this body of flesh? Better far is it to attempt no detailed description of what is beyond our ken and to wait for the happy experience of heavenly glory that, we hope, is in store for us.

III. The General Judgment

(1) *The dogma*

There are few things upon which the Scriptures lay greater emphasis.

Jesus Christ has told us clearly that, at the end of the world, he will judge all men; he will not be simply a witness before God's judgment-seat, but will, himself as judge, pass sentence (Mark xiii, 34-37; Matt. xiii, 37-42; xviv, 48-51; Luke xii, 36-38; 45-48; xxi, 34-36, but specially Matt. vii, 22-23; xvi, 27; xxiv, 30-31). The awe-inspiring scene of the last judgment, described by St. Matthew xxv, 31-46, is wellknown: "And when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty; and all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come ye, blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting." The epistles of St. Paul are equally explicit. Their teaching on the last judgment is simply the development of the gospel teaching, that Jesus is the "judge of the living and the dead" (Acts x, 42; II Tim. iv, 1). In St. Paul, as in the gospels, "the judgment is so closely bound up with the *parousia* (that is, with Christ's second coming) that it is impossible to separate these two scenes, and the Church joins them together in one and the same

article of the creed" (*Prat, La théologie de St. Paul*, ii, p. 152).

St. Paul's favourite term for the general judgment is "the day of the Lord," the day, that is, when the glory of Jesus will be manifested and his kingdom set up in triumph (II Thess, i, 10; I Cor. xv, 25). The object of the judgment will be to do justice, its effect the final establishment of the moral order. "Everyone of us shall have to render account for himself (Rom. xiv, 12); all will have to make known all the actions of his life, good or evil (II Cor., v, 10); a piercing light will reveal our most hidden deeds (Rom. ii, 16); and even the secret movements of our hearts (I Cor. iv, 5). A sentence corresponding with the outcome of this rigorous examination will follow. God will render to every man according to his works (Rom. ii, vi; II Cor. xi, 15; II Tim. iv, 14; I Cor. iii, 8), and just as God is not 'a respecter of persons' in distributing his gifts (Acts x, 34), so he will not be in apportioning retribution (Rom. ii, 11; Col. iii, 25); the evil that has been done will not be forgotten (ibid.), but the good will also be remembered (Eph. vi, 8) so that everyone will receive according to his works," (J. Rivière, art. *Jugement* in *Dict. de théol. catholique*, vol. viii, col. 1758). Lastly, St. Paul teaches that the judgment will be truly universal. All men, Greeks as well as Jews, will come before God's tribunal and, in a sense, the angels themselves (Rom. xiv, 10; 11, 12-16; I Cor. vi, 3).

The other books of the New Testament, though full of the thought of the last judgment, contain hardly any fresh elements. True, the Apocalypse is pre-eminently the eschatological book, but its interpretation is difficult, though the last judgment is clearly proclaimed. "This final judgment," says M. Rivière, "is mentioned for the first time, when the four and twenty ancients, prostrate before God, do homage to his power and kingdom;

'And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest render reward to thy servants the prophets, and the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great, and shouldest destroy them that have corrupted the earth'" (xi, 18) . . . The book ends with a picture of the scene itself. . . "The mysterious reign of a thousand years is over, Satan and his allies are consumed by fire from Heaven. Then, behold, sitting upon his great white throne, him before whose face heaven and earth take flight. All the dead, great and small, rise again to come before the throne, and the books are opened to see what judgment shall be given. The sentence is at once put into execution: those whose names are written in the book of life go into the heavenly Jerusalem; the others, along with Hell and death, are cast into the pool of fire" (xx, 7-15; xxi, 1-5, art. cit. col. 1763).

(2) *Theology of the Judgment*

The theologian has to study all the various elements and aspects of a dogma taught by Scripture and the Church, and carefully to distinguish the certain from the merely probable, so that the truth may be the more clearly seen.

With regard to the general judgment, two points are to be accepted with the certainty of faith, to wit, the fact of the judgment and the person of the judge, Jesus Christ, who will come in glory: *iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos*. Theology provides us with arguments which prove the reasonableness of the dogma, and of which it will suffice to give the outlines as drawn by Father Rivière. "The general judgment is necessary because it is the realization of the moral order that God had originally intended to reign in the world, but that the disorders resulting from sin had done so much to disturb. If the balance is restored for individuals by

the particular judgment, it seems only right that the general situation should also be restored by a general judgment. Ideal justice, postulated by the Christian idea of God, cannot come to its full development before the end of time. Up till then all sorts of obstacles impede its course and prevent us from realizing our individual responsibilities." As St. Thomas well expresses it: "Although death puts an end to man's temporal life, if this be considered in itself, yet in a sense it still depends upon the future." And he then goes on to analyze minutely and carefully the various forms of this "dependence" wherein is verified the wonderfully complex repercussion of man's actions upon human affairs. He instances a man's reputation, which but seldom corresponds with his actual deserts; the family which often falls away from the high standard set by the father; the results of men's deeds, endlessly continued through history, so that we are still suffering from the heresy of Arius and benefiting from the Apostles' faith; the body, in one instance receiving honourable burial, in another suffering abandonment or neglect. "All these are the objects of our activity; some soon pass away, others last a long time, but before God they constitute a perpetual reality, awaiting his final verdict." (Art. cité col. 1815). We may mention another argument in justification of the general judgment, namely, the glorification of God, of Christ and the saints.

As regards the person of the judge, it is of faith that Christ himself will judge the living and the dead. But whereas he came first into the world in suffering and lowliness, his second coming will be in glory. In theory one might conceive him exercising his judicial authority without leaving Heaven, but in order that his triumph over death may be complete, it is but fitting that he should be seen once again in this world as its judge.

So far we have set down what is certain, but as regards other matters, such as the circumstances of the judgment, its place and time, the signs that are to announce it, the vesture of Christ's glory, the separation of just and unjust on right and left, and so forth, there can be no certainty, for we are in the realm of symbolism and conjecture. St. Thomas interprets very broadly the scriptural texts referring to these matters, and in this we cannot do better than imitate him. The judgment, he says, will take place mentally, so that discussion and accusation are to be understood in the manner explained in Chapter II.

(3) *Inquiry and Retribution*

St. Thomas distinguishes two aspects of the judgment, the inquiry or discussion of each man's merits and demerits, and the retribution, wherein he is rewarded or punished. Men must either be let into Heaven or kept out. At the judgment sentence will be passed upon all, a sentence of salvation or damnation. And to avoid all misunderstanding it must be understood that the sentence of condemnation is passed upon all who are shut out from Heaven, even though, escaping Hell, they be relegated to Limbo. As for the "inquiry," those alone will have to undergo it whose lives are a mixture of good and evil necessitating the discussion of their merits and demerits. But this discussion will not, of course, raise any doubt or question about anything. "The discussion of the merits of the blessed," says St. Thomas (*Suppl.* qu. 89, art. 6, ad. 2), will not destroy the certainty of happiness in the hearts of those who are to be judged, but will make it evident to all that in them good has triumphed over evil, and will thus vindicate God's justice." Similarly, "although those who die in mortal sin are certainly damned, yet, since they have some good works mingled with their sins, the discussion

of their merits is necessary for the manifestation of divine justice, and to show that they are justly shut out from the city of the saints" (ibid., art. 7, ad. 1).

We may make some concrete applications of this principle.

Firstly infants who have died before coming to the use of reason will not have to undergo the judgment of inquiry. They will, of course, be present at the judgment, but the sentence passed upon them will relate solely to their eternal destiny, and thus will belong to the judgment of retribution. St. Thomas, it is true, says that "children who die before the age of reason will also appear before God's tribunal, not to be judged, but in order to see the judge's glory" (ibid., art. 5, ad. 3), but there is no doubt that St. Thomas includes these children among those who will have to undergo the judgment of retribution. Thus in his *Commentarium in II Epist.* ad *Corinth*, c.v. lectio 1, he says: "Infants will not be judged concerning the things they have themselves done in this life, but concerning the things they have done through others, as, for example, whether, through others, they were Christians or infidels, baptized or unbaptized; or again, it might be said that they will be condemned on account of the sin committed by our first father." Secondly, St. Thomas seems to exclude adult infidels from the judgment of discussion; they "will be condemned as enemies who are exterminated without any discussion of their merits" (art. 7). Similarly with the adult blessed whose deeds present no admixture of good and evil: "there will be no discussion of their merits, they will be saved without being judged" (art. 6). Hence the only ones to undergo judgment will be those among the faithful whose lives have been sinful or imperfect. In the case of all others the judgment will be one of retribution only.

Thirdly, this teaching which, at first sight, might

seem foreign to the ordinary doctrine of the Church, is the common teaching of the mediæval doctors, and represents that of many of the Latin Fathers. A too literal interpretation of St. John iii, 18, "He that doth not believe is already judged," and of Psalm i, 5, "The wicked shall not rise again in judgment," led these Fathers to set up two classes of the damned, the faithful who are to be judged and the unbelievers whose judgment has already taken place. And since what is true of the lost must apply also to the saved, they divided the latter also into two classes, the first, of those whose deeds will have to be investigated and submitted to judgment, the second containing those whose sanctity is so manifest as to admit of no discussion. St. Gregory, whose influence upon the eschatology of the Latin church was decisive, thus sums up the common teaching of his time: "Some are judged and perish, others are not judged, yet perish likewise; some are judged and reign in glory, others are not judged, but share in the same glory" (*Moralia*, b. 26, ch. 27, no. 5). It is to be noted, however, that this teaching of the Fathers has a wholly moral significance. Undoubtedly, they interpret the psalmist's words too narrowly, but, from the moral point of view, it is profoundly true that the wicked, unbelievers especially, will be incapable of facing God's judgment; they have already delivered, and without any mitigation being possible, their own sentence of condemnation; judgment has already been held upon them; *jam judicatus est.* And, on the other hand, the just who have always been loyal to Jesus, who have always lived the perfect life of faith, are already saved in advance, and no doubt can be entertained of their admission into Heaven. Such is the moral signification of the distinction established by the Fathers and echoed by the Scholastics in the phrases "judgment of inquiry" and "judgment of retribution." But apart from this, it

is still true that every man will be judged and will have to answer for his works. As Suarez (whose treatment of the whole question of the judgment is masterly) well says, why postulate a discussion of the merits and demerits of believers, and deny it in the case of unbelievers? The sins that are the cause of their damnation must be made manifest, as well as those of believers. St. Paul's words, "for we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil" (II Cor. v, 10) are true of all without exception. On the other hand where can be found the just man who is without sin? Apart from the specially privileged case mentioned by the council of Trent (*De justificatione*, can. 23), who is there who can flatter himself that he has avoided all venial sin during life and that, therefore, he has built upon the foundation of faith an edifice of gold, silver and precious stones alone, without any admixture of wood, straw and stubble? St. Thomas, it is true, holds to be exempt from the judgment of inquiry certain of the blessed who, by a very perfect life given wholly to spiritual things, have been made worthy to sit by the side of Jesus Christ and to have a part in the giving of the judgment sentence. These are the Apostles to whom it was said: "You shall sit upon twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix, 28). These are also those who have despised worldly things in order to seek the only true goods of the spirit, and especially the poor in spirit, who have been promised the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. v, 3). Such is St. Thomas's opinion in the *Supplementum* qu. 89, artt. 1 and 2. But it is clear that, if the inquiry means only an examination and weighing of men's works, good and bad, then all those saints who have ever committed a venial sin will have to submit to the judgment of enquiry. But the investigation will be but slight com-

pared with that to be undergone by those who have committed mortal sins and great crimes. (*Suarez In. III. Sti Thomae.* disp. 57, sect. 5-7).

The judgment of the saints being, therefore, of but little importance, may be considered as non-existent.

Fourthly, the qualified way in which St. Thomas speaks of the judgment of infants, shows that it can be called a retributive judgment only analogically. For Heaven is not given to baptized infants as a reward, but as their inheritance; and similarly, the withholding of the beatific vision from unbaptized infants has not a really penal or afflictive character. Rather is it the consequence due to fallen nature, just as celestial happiness is the result due to the state of restored nature. Hence St. Thomas hesitates to speak of infants being judged and says that they will appear before the judgment-seat in order to behold the judge in glory. We have now to show how there is nothing of a penal nature in the denial of the beatific vision to infants who die unbaptized and to others who must be classed with them.

CHAPTER IX

LIMBO

I *Catholic doctrine.* II. *Sufferings of Limbo.* III. *Who go to Limbo: disputed points;* (1) *Virtuous pagans;* (2) *Duration of Limbo.*

I. Catholic Doctrine

The gospels seem to exclude any middle state in the next world, between Heaven and Purgatory on the one hand, and Hell on the other. But it is easy to see that the dogmatic passages concerning the future life, have also an undeniable moral connotation. They refer only to the future state of men capable of moral action and able to choose between good and evil. They do not treat of unbaptized children, incapable of committing actual sin, or of those adults who must be classed with children.

That Scripture is silent as to the future destiny of those whom theology consigns to Limbo need not astonish us. Limbo is mentioned, under the name of "Abraham's bosom," only as the dwelling-place of the just who died before the coming of Christ, but as far as unbaptized infants are concerned, the only scriptural justification for Limbo is the general teaching as to God's eternal justice.

It is then to Tradition that we must appeal for the dogmatic development of this principle of divine justice into the assertion that there is a future state which

is neither that of the blessed in Heaven, nor that of the damned tormented in Hell. Some of the Greek Fathers of the fourth century, notably St. Gregory of Nazianzum and St. Gregory of Nyssa, hint at such a state. Among the Latins, St. Augustine clearly admitted it for unbaptized infants, before the rise of Pelagianism, but owing to the exigencies of controversy, he afterwards was led to postulate the existence of some light, but positive punishment for unbaptized infants, in order to safeguard the doctrine of the Fall. And the sixteenth Council of Carthage promulgated the rigorous doctrine that children dying without baptism will find no place of salvation and rest, even outside of the kingdom of Heaven. But it is to be observed that what St. Augustine and the council condemned was the Pelagian conception of a middle state, which implied that infants were exempt from original sin and from the punishment due to it; a wholly heretical idea, denying the necessity of baptism for eternal life.

Afterwards, although the traditional teaching, that unbaptized infants are exempt from neither guilt nor penalty, was consistently upheld, it came to be recognized that they could not be classed with adults guilty of actual sins. Theologians asked themselves what the consequences of original sin would be in the next world, having regard to the claims of God's justice. Pope Innocent III, writing to the archbishop of Arles, laid it down that actual sin will be punished by the torments of Hell, but that the penalty of original sin will be merely the deprivation of the beatific vision. St. Thomas, starting from the principle that there must be an exact proportion between the nature of the sin and its punishment, draws the logical conclusion from his conception of original sin by teaching that for infants dying unbaptized there will be a special place in the next world, where they will not enjoy eternal life in union with God

seen face to face. But, he adds, they will undergo no positive punishment and will be united with God in so far as they will enjoy their share of natural possessions. Pope John XXII in his letter *Nequaquam sine dolore* (1321) to the Armenians makes explicit mention of the "special place" for souls stained with original sin alone. But we have to wait until the end of the eighteenth century for the first declaration of the existence of Limbo in any document emanating from ecclesiastical authority. The Jansenist synod of Pistoia had said that belief in Limbo was a Pelagian fable. This gave Pope Pius VI the opportunity of expounding clearly the mind of the Church as to those who die in a state of orginal sin only. He declares to be "false, temerarious, and insulting to Catholic theology the proposition which rejects as a Pelagian fable that part of Hell, commonly known as the Limbo of infants, in which the souls of those dying in original sin only are punished by the pain of loss, without the pain of fire, and which regards this teaching as a repetition of the Pelagian error that there is a middle state and place between the kingdom of Heaven and eternal damnation." Hence we must conclude that belief in Limbo is an orthodox belief, the certainty of which is sufficiently guaranteed by the now unanimous agreement of theologians. So we find that the theologians at the Vatican Council had prepared a dogmatic pronouncement on the penalty due to original sin alone. "All those who die in a state of actual mortal sin are shut out from the kingdom of God and will suffer eternally the torments of Hell, without hope of redemption, and even those who die in original sin alone will be deprived of the beatific vision of God." This, though not an explicit affirmation of the doctrine of Limbo, lays down the dogmatic principle whence that doctrine necessarily follows, and it must, therefore, be regarded as theologically certain.

II. The Sufferings of Limbo

Theological speculation concerning the sufferings of the souls in Limbo is divided into two currents of opinion, represented by St. Augustine and St. Thomas. According to St. Augustine, as we have seen, unbaptized infants are not only deprived of the beatific vision, but have to undergo a positive, though very light, punishment. It has been asserted that this doctrine is implied in the profession of faith of Michael Paleologus, at the second Council of Lyons (1267) and in the decree of the Council of Florence, which repeats the formula of Lyons: "The souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin, or a state of original sin alone, go down at once into Hell, to suffer, however, dissimilar punishments, *poenis tamen disparibus puniendas*." But there is nothing really to justify the assertion. The word Hell in the conciliar decree is used with its vague and general meaning of "the lower regions," without any exclusive reference to Hell properly so called. Also the phrase *poenis tamen disparibus* indicates a difference of kind rather than of degree, so that the usual translation, "unequal" is less exact than that now suggested, "dissimilar." Nevertheless many eminent theologians, such as Petavius, Bellarmine, Estius, Bossuet and others have upheld the Augustinian interpretation of the decree. We are by no means bound to accept their view, especially as the decree may be differently rendered in a way quite in agreement with the opinion of St. Thomas. He holds, and most modern theologians hold with him, that the penalty of original sin is merely privative and nowise afflictive. It must be granted that unbaptized infants will know that they are deprived of eternal life and why they are deprived of it, but on the other hand, this knowledge will not cause them to suffer. In the *Com-*

mentary on the Sentences, St. Thomas says that the deprivation of the beatific vision will not cause these infants to suffer, because they will understand that they possess no capacity for it. And in *De Malo* (qu. 5, art. 3, and ad. 1) he explains his reason more exactly. "The souls of these infants will not lack the natural knowledge proper to separated souls, according to their natural exigency, but they will lack the supernatural knowledge which comes by faith, for in this life they neither made an act of faith nor received the sacrament of faith. Now it is natural for the soul to know that it is made for happiness and that this consists in the possession of the sovereign good. But that this supreme good is precisely the glory enjoyed by the saints is something surpassing natural knowledge. . . . Hence the souls of these infants will not know that they are deprived of so great a good, and cannot therefore suffer from its loss." Being in ignorance of their vocation to the beatific vision, its loss will cause them no pain. Yet though they do not feel it, the loss of the beatific vision is, in itself, a very great punishment. "Hence," says Cardinal Billot, in speaking of the state of these children, "we do not use the word 'beatitude.' It is true that their condition taken and considered in itself is one of happiness such as would have been man's heritage if he had been left in a merely natural state, for, as St. Thomas puts it, though cut off from a participation in God's glory, they are not separated from him as regards their participation in natural perfections. But man has been raised to the supernatural state and destined for a supernatural end . . . and beatitude is the state of (supernatural) perfection. . . But unbaptized infants are in a state of guilt, a fallen state, and have failed to reach the end which, in the actual order of Providence, they were meant to attain. The word 'beatitude' then, cannot be applied to them in its proper meaning, and so we say simply, that their

state is that of painless possession of their natural perfections" (*Etudes*, vol. 163, p. 32).

III. Who go to Limbo?

Theoretically the answer to this question is easy. All those go to Limbo who die with original sin only upon their souls. But who these are it is not so easy to determine with accuracy.

Two points are certain. Children who die without baptism before reaching the age of reason are in a state of original sin alone. And with these must be classed those unbaptized adults who, from birth to death, have always been really and totally insane. But when we come to treat of adults who have enjoyed the use of reason, at least to a certain extent, we find ourselves in the region of theological controversy. Two much discussed opinions have been put forward.

1. The first is the theory that virtuous pagans go to Limbo. Claud Seyssel, archbishop of Turin, strongly upheld this opinion in the beginning of the sixteenth century, in his *Traité sur la Providence divine*, written under the influence of the ideas aroused by the recent discovery of America. He discriminates between several classes of infidels. Some are not wholly excusable, because they do not do all they can to find out the truth; they will be punished in proportion to their guilt, but less severely than bad Christians or the enemies of Christ. But in those places to which the truths of Christianity have not been able to penetrate, and where therefore, faith, which is the first step towards salvation, is impossible, we may admit the existence of unbelievers who, following the light of reason, recognize and adore God, Creator and Lord, who practise the precepts of the moral law engraved on men's hearts, and who, if they sin, repent of their sins. Among these unbelievers

Seyssel distinguishes two classes. There are those who do their utmost to find and come to a knowledge of God, and they will certainly be called by grace and be enabled to save their souls. But others, though following the light of reason in the doing of their natural duties, are not so zealous in their efforts to discover the truth; and these, since God can neither admit them into Heaven nor send them to Hell, will go to a middle place, Limbo. There they will enjoy for ever a natural happiness, greater than that of earth, though lower than that of the blessed in Heaven. This theory is inacceptable because it implies what is false and contradictory. It is false to suppose that any class of men can keep the precepts of the natural law or repent of their sins without supernatural help, which, by the very fact of being supernatural, directs the soul towards a supernatural end. It is contradictory to distinguish two classes of virtuous unbelievers: those who, doing their best, find the truth, and those who, doing less than their best, yet keep the moral law, but know not God. For there is, in effect, no moral law without a knowledge of God, the law-giver.

Nevertheless the leading ideas of this theory have been repeated under different forms during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Abbé de Malleville, Mgr. de Pressy, Mgr. Duvoisin, Muzzarelli, Fraysinous, Bergier and others held that virtuous pagans will enjoy a natural happiness in Limbo. The theory is put forward in Migne's *Revision des Démonstrations Evangéliques* (T. XVIII, col. 997), in the *Catéchisme du concile de Trente* annotated by the Abbé Doney, in the *Traité de l'Origine et de la Réparation du mal* by the Abbé Actorie, and in the *Mélanges* of Balmés. Echoes of it are to be found in the works of the Abbé Martinet, the Abbé Moigno, and even of de Broglie. So that the thesis maintained by "Un Professeur de Théologie" in the "Science et Religion" series, far from being a novelty, is but the re-assertion of

a four hundred years old theory which, as it stands, cannot be accepted.

2. The theory recently propounded by Cardinal Billot in a series of articles on the *Providence de Dieu* in the *Etudes* is of a very different character. The eminent theologian asks whether "in addition to unbaptized infants, we must not include a perhaps equally great number of adult unbelievers . . . adult, that is, in years, in physical development, and even, if you like, in mind as far as the understanding of temporal things is concerned, though not as regards the higher reason, and as regards awareness to the dictates of conscience." These physical or material adults are lacking in the higher faculty of reason, that faculty which deals with things divine, transcendental and eternal, especially with God and his law as the binding rule of human conduct. Such adults are not idiots, but their minds are always absorbed in purely earthly things and cannot rise to the consideration of God and the true good. Hence they are not adults in the formal and theological meaning of the world. May there not be a large number of such men, adults in age but not in mind or conscience, who are quite incapable of committing formal sin, and who, therefore, cannot possibly be condemned to the torments of Hell? Cardinal Billot lays it down that, for the mass of mankind, the only means of coming to a definite knowledge of God as the Creator of the world, and of the moral law, is instruction. But instruction, though natural provision and preparation for it have been made, may be lacking owing to the use or misuse of human freedom. Instruction in divine truth may have disappeared from certain parts of the world owing to man's fault, and so paved the way for invincible ignorance, which relieves man of responsibility.

The difference between this theory and Seyssel's is clear. The latter consigns to Limbo formal adults,

that is, those who are matured in mind as well as years, and even those who, according to Catholic principles are quite able to direct their lives towards God and supernatural happiness. Cardinal Billot, faithful to the principles of tradition and St. Thomas, allows to formal adults only the alternatives of Heaven or Hell. But in addition to these, adults in the formal and theological sense, he recognizes a whole class of merely physical or material adults, whose higher reason is not sufficiently developed to give them real moral responsibility. They are innocents, with a wholly negative innocence, and not formally and theologically adults. Hence the teaching of the Fathers and theologians relative to adults is not applicable to them.

It would be hard to contest the validity of the principle on which this theory is based. But on the question of fact there may well be differences of opinion. Does there really exist such a class of physical adults, who because of their invincible ignorance of the true, living God, cannot be called adults in mind and conscience? From the eminent cardinal's principles, "principles shown to be true by the clearest evidence of constant and universal experience," it follows, he declares, that "the hypothesis of whole masses of men wallowing in invincible ignorance of God's law and commandments, owing to the absolute lack of teaching and the contrary influence of pagan education, is by no means improbable in itself, and cannot *a priori* be looked upon as rash or inadmissible."

There is, however, one serious objection that Cardinal Billot does not deal with, that of the universality of God's call to salvation. Does God give or does he not give to each and all of those able to correspond, grace sufficient for salvation? We know that many modern theologians hold that God not only prepares graces sufficient to ensure the salvation of all men and of every individual, but that he actually gives these graces to each

and all. The first part of this assertion is a matter of faith, because of the universality of God's will to save all men, and of Christ's redemptive death for all; but theologians are not unanimous on the second half of the proposition. The actual giving of sufficient grace depends on many causes besides God's saving will and Christ's redemptive death. And Cardinal Billot's answer to the objection brought against him would, no doubt, be cast in the mould of what he has written in his treatise *De Deo Uno* about the fate of unbaptized infants: "God is prepared to give to all and each sufficient means of salvation; he actually gives such means unless prevented by some obstacle arising from the exercise of man's free will, or from the course of natural events." In the case of material adults the obstacle to the actual giving of grace sufficient for salvation arises from the exercise of human liberty, through former generations' forgetfulness of primitive revelation.

Whatever we may hold as to this, it is certain that they who go to Limbo will stay there for eternity. Catholic tradition is unanimous in excluding them definitely from Heaven. In fact the continuity of the Church's teaching on Limbo, in spite of a fuller understanding of the penalty due to original sin, is engrafted upon this tradition of definite exclusion from Heaven. We must therefore reject, as certainly erroneous, the theory put forward in a manual of dogmatic theology lately published in Germany, that the souls of unbaptized infants may possibly, in time, come to enjoy eternal beatitude, "if good men would but offer up for them Christ's merits and their own."

Appendix

Can it be said that the dead who have been miraculously restored to life had reached the end of their time of probation?

The question is of some importance, as an affirmative answer would, to a great extent, weaken the whole basis of our argument throughout this treatise, to wit, the principle of the soul's fixation in good or evil immediately after death. A brief examination is, therefore, necessary.

First of all, the fact of certain miraculous resurrections cannot be denied. There is no question here of those legends, so readily accepted in the Middle Ages, of souls having been freed from Hell. But the Bible gives us several examples, especially in the New Testament, of the dead being raised to life, and the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is sufficient guarantee of the truth of these records.

It is a matter of but little moment whether the persons thus raised had died in the state of grace or of mortal sin. For all the same question arises: was death the end of their state of probation, and had they entered upon the state wherein the soul is irrevocably fixed in good or evil?

The theologian must admit that these cases are exceptions to the general rule established in our first chapter. From all eternity God had foreseen and foreordained the reunion of these souls with their bodies; therefore, at the moment of death the definite sentence of judgment was not pronounced, but held over.

"These men were adults in the full exercise of reason. There are then but two alternatives; they died either in a state of grace, God's friends, or in a state of sin, his enemies. If you choose the second alternative the argument is ended, for here we have sinners whose sentence of condemnation is suspended, so that they can re-enter the state of probation and, doing penance, arrive at justification. If you prefer the former alternative, then you must admit that their final sentence calling them to their eternal reward had not been pronounced when the voice of the worker of the miracle called them back to life. But if the verdict that beatifies can be suspended why not the sentence of condemnation? When we remember that 'mercy exalteth itself above judgment' (James ii, 13), the more wonderful thing is not that God should bring back a sinner to the life of probation in order to save him, but rather that he should postpone the sentence that in the ordinary way should follow immediately upon death, and make the just man unchangeably fixed in his state of grace" (Terrien, *La Mère des Hommes*, T. II, pp. 359-360).

The further question may be asked, what was the state of these souls pending their resurrection? "In so obscure a matter," continues Terrien (p. 361) "it seems most likely that these souls, during the short time of separation from their bodies, were devoid of all consciousness until restored to their former state. Hence their complete lack of knowledge as to anything that took place during the period of separation. I am quite aware that several ancient records tell us of wonderful visions concerning other-worldly things vouchsafed to certain souls. These are isolated cases of which it is not for me to judge; but in any case we cannot regard as authentic any visions which imply the exercise of organic faculties, for a disembodied soul has no other mode of cognition but that proper to spirits."

Hence we may conjecture that these disembodied souls were given infused knowledge, and consequently as, upon reunion with their bodies, they would be unable to link up these infused ideas with the perceptive cognition proper to this life, they would be unable to remember what they had learned in the other world.

However this may be, these miraculous resurrections afford no serious ground for disputing the psychological law of the immutability of the soul that has really reached the state of finality.

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